THE ITALY OF TODAY SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF YESTERDAY

In Milan and on the Lakes of Lombardy

WITH STENDHAL

MACDONALD

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Edited by Franca Piazza

Translated by John Garrett

Illustrated with thirty-two photographic plates in colour by Piero Castellenghi

Preface by Diego Valeri

This extremely handsome and superbly illustrated book is a companion volume to the highly praised *From Lake Garda To Sicily,* and presents still more facets of the Italy of today seen through the eyes of yesterday.
The Italy of to-day is represented by thirty-two plates that reproduce in extraordinarily vivid detail and colour the brilliant photography of Piero Castellenghi. The Italy of yesterday is linked to these outstanding pictures by a text composed of skilfully selected and edited extracts from the writings of Stendhal during the early nineteenth century. Many great writers have described the Italian scene, but Stendhal in his journals and novels was more concerned to capture the vivid atmosphere of the land and its people; to convey his sheer delight in all he saw.
" He is," writes Diego Valeri in the preface to this book, " the guide and master, the ideal companion for any who wish to understand and feel the intimacy, the reality of Italy."
Milan, Lake Maggiore and its islands, Varese, Lake Como, Brianza, Lake Garda and Pavia are the focal points of this journey into Lombardy, which also contains a map and several prints and engravings contemporary with the period of Stendhal's own writings.

THE ITALY OF TODAY SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF YESTERDAY

In Milan and on the Lakes of Lombardy

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32 COLOURED PLATES

With original extracts from Stendhal's works and Preface by Diego Valeri

MACDONALD: LONDON

PREFACE

It has been said that illustrious travellers—by which is meant writers or artists of genius who have travelled, spoil for us irreparably any pleasure we might have in seeing things with our own eyes, discovering them for ourselves and loving them in our own way.

This, of course, like all paradoxes, is not without truth; suffice it to recall the moribund Venice of Byron, or the downright corpse-like portrayal by Thomas Mann: these are two " horrors " of genius which we are at pains to expel from our memories for all the splendour of the real Venice around us.

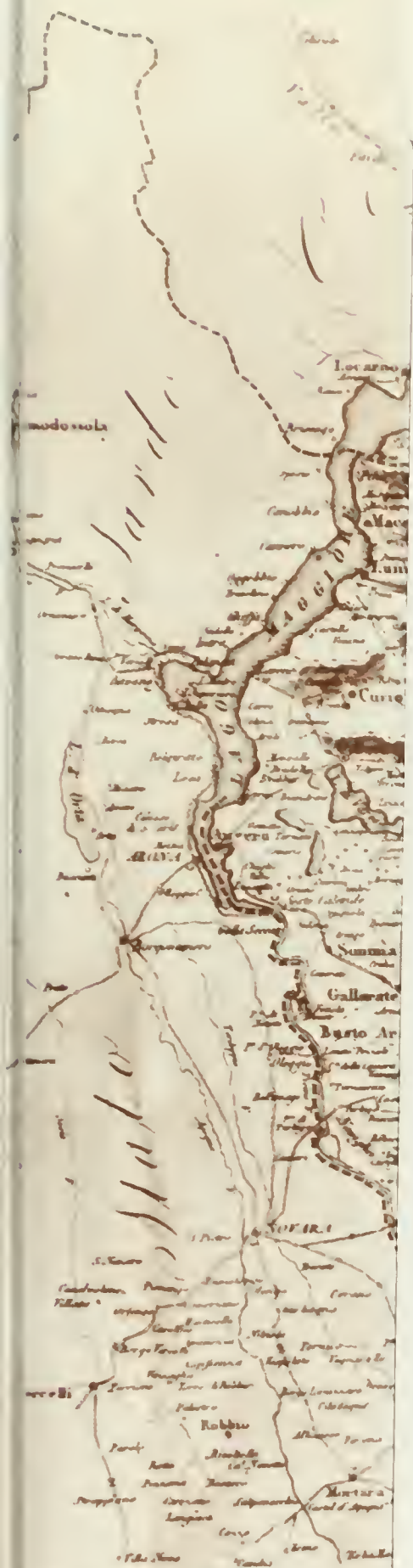
The paradox has, indeed, some truth in it; and yet how much more true is the opposite! Here is a marvellous land whose beauty is still athrob with the ardent gaze of Corot, of Cézanne, of Van Gogh; where the air rings still with the rapture of Petrarch, of Leopardi and Hölderlin. A land such as this touches our hearts not merely for what it is, but also for what it has become through the admirable vision of these men of genius. Thus there are two images, and these merge into one of twofold, of manifold, splendour. " Suso in Italia bella giace un laco ... "—and each of us can feel how the natural light of Lake Garda merges with the spiritual light of Dante's poetry, and becomes thereby wonderfully enhanced.

But Stendhal's case is of a different kind, different from all the others. It stands by itself, more moving and more mysterious, perhaps, than any other. Stendhal has bequeathed to us neither enthralling descriptions nor dazzling pictures. He has left us nothing but the notes of his diary and the scenery in his novels little more, in fact, than backcloths. The beauty, the poetry that is, of the Italian towns and countryside has been translated by him into prose, a prose which is rapid and intentionally simple, yet so direct and tense as to seem improvised. He did not wish, nor had he ever wished, to " put on airs and graces "—we know how he hated Chateaubriand's neat " phrases ";—he wanted only to sing the praises of beauty, to live and enjoy the sheer happiness of it, noting, as he did so, the days and hours in which this supreme blessing was granted to him.

The result is that the places which he saw and " noted " in Italy do not resound with his harmonious descriptions, nor do they spring to life in imaginative colours from his brush; however—and this is the miracle—they have kept their vivid atmosphere, conveying all the warm enthusiasm, the very heartbeats of a man in love.

He is and, it must be added, he remains, the guide and master, the ideal companion for any who wish to understand and to feel the intimacy, the reality of Italy. Indeed, he never seeks to impose himself upon reality, distorting or recasting it according to his will; on the contrary, he receives it, welcomes it and makes it his own, to serve with humility and to love. His whole method, in fact, can be summed up in the one word: love.

Diego Valeri

HENRY BEYLE

Locarno
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Geografica-postale
delle
PROVINCE LOMBARDE

HENRY BEYLE

INTRODUCTION

"What interest can there be in a portrait of Italy as it was in 1817?" This was the question which, in 1824, Stendhal asked those who pressed for a new edition of his Italian diary, published seven years earlier under the title 'Rome, Naples and Florence in 1817'.
We need not be afraid to ask the same question, since Stendhal himself has provided us with an answer which is still just as valid as it was more than a century ago.
"Travellers all depict only Italian *things*: monuments and places and the sublime aspects of nature. Whereas you, they tell me, you draw more or less effective sketches of the customs of the inhabitants, of *Italian society*, that mixture of singular habits in matters of love, of voluptuousness, of solitude, of frankness, etc., which from time to time still yields up great men like Canova or Rossini ..."

Nothing could be more true. Stendhal presents his travels in Italy as though they were a collection of careful notes, made regularly every evening, and yet in no way do they resemble the notebook of an arid, pedantic traveller; rather do they present a variegated fabric, interwoven with easily-told anecdotes, brilliant digressions, and political or literary reflections. The author's chief intention had been to concern himself with music, "the only art which is still alive in Italy"; but music soon becomes a means and a pretext for direct contact with men and their surroundings, so that the musical chronicle became a chronicle of customs, and a personal diary was transformed into a historical document of undisputed interest, into a colourful, still vivid picture of Italy at the time of the Restoration.
The 'Promenades dans Rome' were written twelve years later with the express purpose of providing the "*bien élevé*" traveller with a guide to Rome; yet not even they present a genuine itinerary, nor are they the equivalent of 'Reisebilder'. True, the indispensable tourist information is there, and there is even a guide, in appendix form, on "How to see Rome in ten Days"; but, as the author himself declares in a letter to V. de la Pelouze, "instead of describing pictures or statues, he describes customs and morals, the art of the pursuit of happiness in Italy"; that is why the most genuine and vital part of the

'Promenades' is that which deals with historical and sociological questions, analysing the social milieu and enquiring into human behaviour.
Stendhal kept his 'Journal' for the sole purpose of knowing himself better and of learning to present his own thoughts with clarity; but here, too, the pages that concern Italy, by narrating the author's meetings, pastimes, amorous adventures and mishaps, give us a manifold and splendidly colourful portrayal of Lombard society and customs in Napoleonic times.
Not only does Stendhal flee from all arid descriptions and classifications of monuments and works of art, frequently resorting, when he has to, to those by other authors, and seizing every opportunity to intervene with sallies into contemporary topicalities or history, but he shows the same reluctance—in his itineraries, autobiographical writings and novels alike—to describe at length landscapes and panoramas. And yet he is anything but insensible to the beauty of nature. From his earliest boyhood he had learnt to love vast horizons during walks, with his friend Bigillion, in the country round Grenoble, and—as he confides to us several times in his 'Vie de Henry Brulard'—what makes him feel most depressed and disappointed with Paris is the fact that there are no mountains there. It is, incidentally, in this very work that Stendhal makes an interesting avowal: "I have ever sought after beautiful landscapes with my finest feelings, and this is the only reason why I have travelled. Landscapes, like a musician's *bow*, have made my soul vibrate ..." And, as though these words were not enough, here we have him repeating, in his 'Mémoires d'un Touriste': "I love beautiful landscapes; they have the same effect upon my spirit as that of a skilful bow upon the sonorous chords of a violin; they arouse strange sensations in me; they swell my joy and make unhappiness more bearable". Like himself, his heroes, confronted by a grandiose panorama, feel a sort of joyous exaltation: Fabrizio del Dongo on the banks of Lake Como, and Julien Sorel on the wooded slopes of the Jura, are examples. To tell the truth, Stendhal, rather than sketch a skyline or the harmonious curve of an inlet, prefers to record the feelings which they arouse in him and his own state of mind at the sight of them. But, in doing this, he chooses the simplest, least colourful words, because the very intensity of his emotion has a paralysing effect upon him, reducing, to some extent, his ability to describe, and causing him bashfully to suppress his feelings with a mass of anecdotes and comments. "To describe tender feelings in scrupulous detail is to waste them", Stendhal declares, as a parting word, in 'Vie de Henry Brulard', and undoubtedly he is just as convinced that to present the smallest particular of a landscape would mean shattering its enchantment.
Starting from this premise, the reader will certainly realise that it would have been useless for us to pursue our imagined Stendhal itinerary through the cities and across the lakes of Lombardy by looking for an ordered list of churches and museums to visit; neither can he expect a wide selection of picturesque landscape descriptions. Indeed, it had never been our intention to present a new Baedecker; had that been the case, we should have had a ready-made one, by Stendhal himself, which he dictated to his friend, Romain Colomb, in 1828, when the latter was about to leave for Italy. This consisted of thirty

or so pages, packed with notes and practical advice on the most economical means of transport, the best restaurants, and the location of famous buildings and monuments. Thanks to this little pocket guide, which was invaluable to Colomb, we know precisely at which inns Stendhal stayed, what routes he followed and how much he spent; however, it would be of very little use to the modern tourist.
Instead, we would rather refer the reader to the advice given by Stendhal to his sister, Pauline, in a letter, written in 1811: " In general," he writes, " there are four things to observe in Italy: 1) the nature of the soil or the climate; 2) the character of the inhabitants; 3) painting, sculpture and architecture; 4) music ";—and the order of these points indicates clearly the method followed by Stendhal in his investigations. We would particularly commend to the reader another letter to Pauline, which has come down to us under the title ' Avis aux têtes légères qui vont en Italie '; (1) here she is enjoined, before setting out on her journey, to consult the writings of famous travellers and give herself adequate spiritual preparation. Finally, her brother lists for her the exquisite pleasures that Italy will have to offer her: " 1) To breathe sweet, pure air; 2) see superb landscapes; 3) *to have a bit of a lover*; (2) 4) to see fine pictures; 5) to listen to good music; 6) to see beautiful churches; 7) seeing lovely statues."

In his ' Vie de Henry Brulard ', Stendhal claims to have an Italian ancestor, who took refuge in Provence, in the retinue of a high prelate, after having committed " a little murder " in his own country. This fact is supposed to have been related to him, when he was still a child, by his great-aunt Elizabeth. " But what impressed me more at the time ", he recounts, " was that my family came from a country where oranges grew. What a delicious country, I thought! "
Here we find him then, in May 1800, making his way on horseback towards that blessed land, which, meanwhile, has also become for him the country of Dante, Ariosto and Tasso. Young Henry Beyle is seventeen years, three months old, and is going to join the Army of Italy in Lombardy. Having left behind him a sad childhood in Grenoble and bitter disappointments in Paris, there now opens up before him an adventure in which he can hope to see the final realisation of his fondest dreams.
The young Beyle, crossing the Alps, cuts something of a quixotic figure. He wears civilian clothes, but has provided himself with a big sabre. This is only the second or third time in his life that he has been in the saddle, and his long-suffering mare has to bear upon her rump a large trunk full of books. Proceding along the steep paths of the St. Bernard Pass, he is lost in one long daydream and imagines to himself the deeds of Rinaldo and Ferraù, almost oblivious to the cold and snow and the yawning chasms to one side of him. "*Is this all* the St. Bernard is? ", he keeps asking his travelling-companion, Captain Burelviller; but he has the latter to thank for the fact

(1) ' Advice to the light-headed, bound for Italy'.
(2) In English in the original

that he does not succeed in breaking his neck. " I was quite inebriated, mad with joy and happiness ", he wrote thirty-five years later. " From that moment on begins for me a period of enthusiasm and perfect happiness. Only when I became a dragoon in the 6th Regiment were my joy and exultation diminished, but that was no more than an eclipse. I did not know then that I had attained the highest degree of happiness that living man can find on this earth. And yet this is the truth—and only four months after being so unhappy in Paris ..."
This first experience, acquired to the compelling accompaniment of Napoleonic fanfares, was his at an age when enthusiasms come easily but wholeheartedly; it helped to implant in Stendhal's mind a picture of Italy that was both heroic and romantic and continued to hold him in its spell. This fact must be kept in view if we are to achieve an accurate appraisal of his subsequent judgements, some of his exclamations and some of his exaggerations.

Everything seems to contribute towards making this journey of his unforgettable. Near Fort Bard he receives a sort of baptism of fire, for the road which he follows passes, for a few yards, under the line of fire of the Austrian artillery. At Ivrea, he sees a mediocre performance of Cimarosa's 'Matrimonio Segreto', and thus is revealed to him, for the first time, the thing which is to be the most lasting of his life's pleasures. He is therefore perfectly right when he says: " My life was completely transformed, and all my Paris disappointments buried for ever ... To live in Italy and to listen to such music became the basis of all my reasoning ".
So it was that, before even reaching Milan, the young Beyle had discovered his vocation and decided what his future was to be. The ecstasy that gripped him as he listened to the Cimarosa arias was slow to relinquish its hold; so much so, in fact, that he had no exact recollection of the last stage of his journey.

" Except that I am beside myself with joy ", he writes, " I have really nothing to say about the journey from Ivrea to Milan. The sight of the countryside delighted me. I did not feel that ultimate beauty had been attained; but when, between the Ticino and Milan, the trees became so numerous, the vegetation and—I remember—the maize-stems so thick that one could not see a hundred paces to left or to right—*that* was what I found beautiful.
" This is what Milan has meant to me for twenty years (1800 to 1820), and today I can still hardly say that this picture that I love has become separate from all that is beautiful. My reason tells me: but Naples and Posillipo, for example, the country round Dresden, the ruined walls of Leipzig, the Elbe from near Rainville to Altona, the Lake of Geneva, etc.—these really are beautiful. It is only my reason that tells me that; my heart feels only Milan and the *luxuriant* country that surrounds it. "

MILAN

It is here that I have found the greatest pleasures and the greatest pain; here, that which, above all, makes a place one's home-land: my first pleasures. It is here that I wish to spend my old age and to die.

It was thus in this state of grace that Stendhal arrived in Milan in the first days of June. He entered the town through Porta Vercellina, and made his way to Porta Nuova, where his cousins, the Darus, had taken lodgings.

At this point, we let him speak:

" Entering Milan one lovely spring morning—and what a spring, and what a country!—I saw Martial three paces away from me, on my left. I can still see him there; it was in *Corsia del Giardino,* a little further on than Via dei Bigli, at the beginning of Corsia di Porta Nova.

" We wore a blue riding-coat and a hat edged with adjutant general's braiding. He was very glad to see me.

" ' We thought you were lost ', said he.

" ' My horse became ill in Geneva ', I replied, ' I didn't leave until the ... '

" ' I'll show you the house; it's only a stone's throw from here '.

" I bade farewell to Captain Burelviller, and have never seen him again.

" Martial retraced his steps and conducted me to Casa d'Adda ...

" The façade of Casa d'Adda had not been finished, the greater part of it being of coarse bricks, like San Lorenzo in Florence. I entered a magnificent court-yard. I dismounted from my horse, full of astonishment and admiring all around me. I went up by a superb stairway. Martial's servants untied my trunk and led away the horse.

" I went up with him, and soon found myself in a superb drawing-room looking on to the Corsia. I was delighted; it was the first time that architecture had had this effect upon me. Then they brought me some excellent bread-crumbed cutlets. For many years after, this dish reminded me of Milan.

" This city became for me the finest place on earth. I have no feeling at all for the charm of my own country; I have for the place where I was born a repugnance amounting to physical disgust (sea-sickness). From 1800 to 1821, Milan was for me the place where I always wanted to live.

" The few months which I spent there in 1800 were the happiest time of my

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Note: Words and phrases which were originally written by Stendhal in Italian or in the Milanese dialect have been left in that form in this book.

life. I returned as often as I could in 1801 and 1802, being garrisoned at Brescia and Bergamo, and eventually elected to live there from 1815 to 1821. My reason alone tells me, although it is now 1836, that Paris is worth more. About 1803 or [180]4, I was in Martial's study and had to avoid raising my eyes to look at a print which presented a distant view of Milan Cathedral; the memory was too tender and gave me pain."

In the above lines, Stendhal has traced a rapid chronology of his stays in Milan. We will not give the reader a detailed account of these sojourns —others have already done so—and we shall not follow Stendhal in all his travels and excursions in Lombardy. We will, however, as far as is possible, try to present Stendhal's movements in order of time, and will not omit to record facts and events, both personal and historical, of special interest, or that are indispensable in order to explain and understand a particular state of mind or a particular reaction of the author's.
Thus we have left the young Beyle in the apartments of Casa d'Adda, still full of excitement after his journey and already surrounded by new things to marvel at. Let us now see what he writes, twenty days or so later, to his sister Pauline:

"... As you know, I am in Milan; it is a big town, five times the size of Grenoble and fairly well built. There is a church built in the Gothic style; that is to say its tracery is moulded into full arches; on second thoughts it is very striking, but it has not the spontaneous appeal of the sublime Pantheon. In order to have an idea of it, you must imagine a circular gallery, 50 to 60 feet long and as high as the four belfries of Saint-André stood one upon the other. The church has not been finished, and probably never will be; in general, the interior is not beautiful, but the various craftsmen who have contributed to its construction must have possessed an infinite and astonishing patience; there are perhaps a thousand statues, varying in size from forty feet to six inches ... There is a splendid theatre here. Just imagine, the inside is as big as half of Place Grenette. The same opera is performed there for fifteen consecutive days; the music is divine and the actors detestable. All the boxes are booked, so that we only have the floor, or the box belonging to General Staff. I am making every effort to learn a little Italian, but having been unable to find a ... (1), I am making very slow progress. As a matter of fact, my duties do not allow me to work at it as much as I should like. I have formed a far higher opinion of the Italians than people have in France; I have fallen in with two or three of them who really astonish me with the wisdom of their ideas and the honourable sentiments that reign over their hearts. One thing, however, which I certainly never expected, is the charming amiability of the women in this country. You may not believe me, but really, at this moment, I should despair if I had to return to Paris."

(1) Here the letter is torn.

Milan. Corsia dei Servi

These, indeed, are days full of sunshine for Henry Beyle. He has happened upon a town in festive mood whose populace is exulting at the arrival of the French; Napoleon's victory at Marengo is being celebrated with balls, parades and illuminations. Stendhal's cousin Martial and his friend Joinville have introduced him to a new fascinating world, where the women are beautiful and amiable, conversation sparkling and agreeable, and where all the French, including the obscure and callow army clerk, are welcomed with warmth. Stendhal was to evoke these delicious days many times in his works.

In the last pages of 'Vie de Henry Brulard', he speaks of them with acute nostalgia. In the first chapter of the 'Chartreuse' he gives us an admirable description of a people emerging intoxicated into the light of liberty after long years of darkness and despotism. But perhaps it is in the 'Memoires sur Napoléon', that he has most finely depicted old Milanese customs, and, even if the date is put back to that of Napoleon's first entry into Milan in 1796, made the clearest autobiographical references:

"Thus, at the beginning, enthusiasm was both sincere and general; the only exceptions were a few, high-ranking priests and noblemen. Later on this enthusiasm waned, and the cause of it was seen to be the extreme poverty of the army. The good Milanese people did not know that the presence of an army, even a liberating army, is always a great calamity.

" In this pretty women are an exception, for they are saved from the *evil of boredom.* An army consisting entirely of young men, none of whom had ambitions, was admirably suited for turning their heads. Through a coincidence of the sort that only occurs at the most infrequent intervals, there were at that time in Milan twelve or fifteen women of the rarest beauty, a collection the like of which no Italian town has produced these forty years. Writing after so much time has elapsed, I can hope, alas! to shock no convention by recording here a wan recollection of some of the charming women whom we met at the *Casin della Città,* and later on at the dances at *casa Tanzi.* Among the beauties at that time extolled in Milan were Signora Ruga, the wife of a lawyer who later became one of the governors of the Republic; Pietra Grua; Marini, a physician's wife; Countess Are ..., her friend, who belonged to the highest ranks of the nobility; Signora Monti, a Roman and the wife of Italy's greatest modern poet; Madame Lambert, who had enjoyed the favours of the Emperor Joseph II, and who, although already of a certain age, was still a model of seductive grace such as to rival Madame Bonaparte herself. To end with the most seductive creature, whose eyes were perhaps more beautiful than any one had ever seen, one must mention Signora Gherardi from Brescia, sister of the generals Lecchi and daughter of the celebrated Count Lecchi, of Brescia, whose foolish excesses of love and jealousy were noticed even in Venice ...

" All these ravishingly beautiful women would not have missed for anything appearing every night at the *Corso,* which at that time took place on the bastion of Porta Orientale.[1] This is a former Spanish rampart, raised about forty feet above a flat stretch of grass and planted with chestnut trees by Count Firmian.

" On the town side, this rampart overlooks some gardens, while, above the tall trees of the villa, later named *Villa Bonaparte,* there rises the splendid filigree form, built of white marble, of Milan Cathedral. This audaciously-conceived Cathedral knows no rival in the world except St. Peter's in Rome, and is more striking.

(1) Now Porta Venezia.

" The countryside round Milan, seen from the Spanish ramparts which, in the middle of such an uniform plain, constitute a notable eminence, is covered with trees to such an extent that it appears to be a thick forest where the eye cannot penetrate. Beyond this country, a picture of truly astonishing fertility, the immense chain of the Alps rises up, some leagues distant; their peaks are covered with snow, even in the hottest months. Looking from the bastion of Porta Orientale, the eye may scan the whole long chain from Monviso and Monte Rosa as far as the mountains of Bassano. The nearest parts, although twelve or fifteen leagues away, seem barely further than three leagues. The contrast of the extreme fertility of a fine summer and the mountains covered with eternal snow filled the soldiers of the Army of Italy with admiration, for, for three years, they had inhabited the arid rocks of Liguria. They were pleased at being able to recognise Monviso, which, for so long, they had seen towering above their heads, and behind which they now saw the sun set. The fact is, that nothing can be compared to the countryside of Lombardy. Enchanted, the eye follows this admirable Alpine chain over a distance of more than sixty leagues, from the mountains above Turin to those of Cadore in Friuli. The rugged, snow-clad peaks form a wonderful contrast with the voluptuous plain and hills in the foreground; the latter compensate for the intense heat, from which one comes in search of relief to the bastion of Porta Orientale. In the bright Italian daylight, the foot of these mountains, whose summits are covered in dazzlingly white snow, appears light brown: the scene is vividly reminiscent of the country painted by Titian. One can see the country houses built on the nearest slopes of the Alps, on the Italian side, so clearly because of the purity of the air, to which we northeners were not accustomed, that one would imagine one were only two or three leagues away. The local people would point out to young Frenchmen, delighted with the sight, the Ridge of Lecco (or *Rezegon de Leck*) and, farther to eastward, the great gap forming the hollow in the mountains in which Lake Garda is situated. Two months later, it was from this point on the horizon that the Milanese, gathered on the bastion of Porta Orientale, anxiously heard the approaching rumble of the cannon of Lonato and Castiglione; their fate was being decided. Not only was it a question of the fate of all the institutions in which they had placed their most ardent hopes, but, besides, each man might well ask himself: Into what state prison shall I be thrown, if the Austrians return to Milan?

" In those days, their passion for the French was at its height, and they had forgiven the army all its requisitioning.

"But, to return to the *Corso* in Milan, whose admirable position has led us into these descriptions, the reader should know that it would be considered passing indecent in Italy for anyone to miss that drive in a carriage called the *Corso*, which every day gives respectable society the opportunity to meet.

After having gone round the *Corso* once, all the carriages assemble in a line and remain thus for half an hour. The French could not recover from the astonishment caused them by this type of promenade without movement. The prettiest women would come to the *Corso* in carriages, known as *bastardelles*, which stood very low off the ground and made it very easy to converse with those on foot. After half an hour's conversation, all the carriages would move off as night fell (at the hour of the *Ave Maria*) and, without leaving their carriages, the ladies would come and take ices at the most celebrated café, which, in those days, was the one in *Corsia dei Servi* [1].

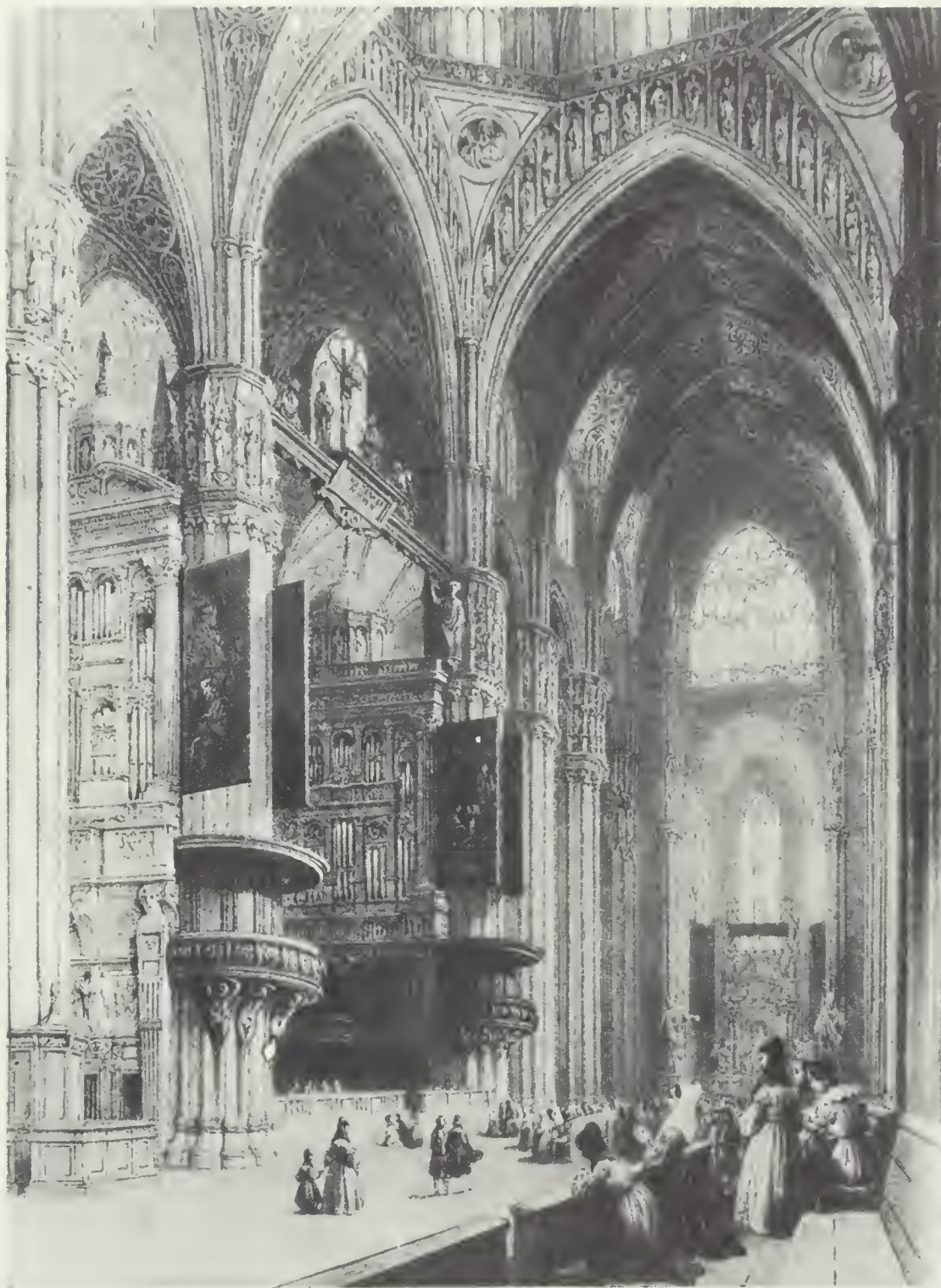
" God knows, the officers of that young army did not fail to be on the bastion of Porta Orientale at the hour of the *Corso*. The officers of the general staff stood out brilliantly, because they were on horseback and stopped beside the ladies' carriages. Before the army arrived, there were never more than two rows of carriages at the *Corso*; but in our day there were always four rows, stretching the whole length of the promenade, and sometimes six. As they arrived, the carriages would complete their individual circuits at a slow jog between those six rows.

" Infantry officers, who could not penetrate this maze, cursed the officers on horseback, and, later, would go and sit outside the fashionable café; there they could speak to the ladies of their acquaintance while the latter ate ices. Most of the officers, after this brief conversation, would return through the night to their quarters, sometime five or six leagues distant.

" For them, neither reward nor advancement would have been comparable to this new kind of life which was so novel to them. They travelled back from Milan to their quarters in a *sediole*, lent them by some friend; the *sediole* is a conveyance with two very high wheels and is drawn along, at a fast trot, by a thin horse, which often does three leagues in an hour.

" These expeditions, which the officers undertook without permission, cast local headquarters and the commander, General Despinois, into despair. *Orders of the day* were always being put up threatening the itinerant officers with destitution, but no one paid the slightest heed to them. The general commanding divisions, with the exception of old Serrurier, were indulgent.

" Some officers rode in from ten leagues away to spend the evening at the *Scala* in the box of a woman of their acquaintance. During that summer of 1796 that, after the army had endured two years of misery and inaction among the nearby rocks of Savona, gave them an admirable mixture of danger and pleasure, it was always the officers of the most distant regiments who met outside the café in *Corsia dei Servi*. Many, because they were unable to show the pass granted by their colonel and signed by the brigadier-general, would leave their *sediole* outside the entrance and enter as if on foot. After their ices, the ladies went home for an hour, perhaps to receive some visit; then they would re-appear in their boxes at the *Scala*. The boxes are, as is known, like little drawing-rooms, where each lady could receive eight to ten friends at a time. There was scarcely a French officer who was not admitted

(1) Now Corso Vittorio Emanuele.

The interior of Milan Cathedral

to several boxes. Men who felt enamoured but shy, and had not this good fortune, consoled themselves by occupying a seat on the floor of the theatre; this seat was carefully chosen and always the same one, and from here these daring warriors would direct most respectful glances towards the object of their attentions. If their look were returned through the wrong end of the

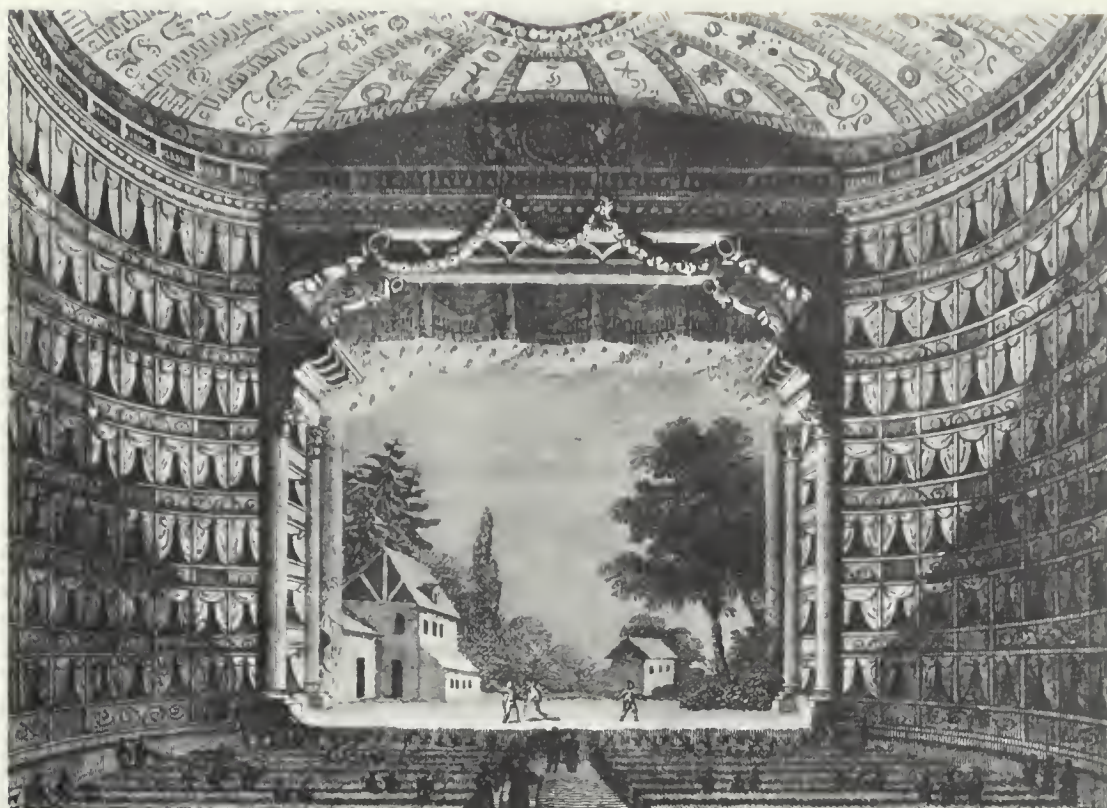
opera-glasses—which made them seem further away—they would account themselves most unfortunate. Were not the vagaries of an army of young men, to whom victory gave such light-hearted pleasures, indeed limitless?

" On Fridays, on which day there is no theatre in Italy, in memory of the Passion, there was a gathering at the *Casino dell'Albergo della Città* (Corsia dei Servi); here, there was dancing and *conversation* ...

" If it is true that the Milanese were mad with enthusiasm, then the French officers were mad with happiness, and this state of inebriation continued up to the time of their separation. Personal relationships also lasted until the day of parting, and often with devotion on both sides. On the return to France, after Marengo, in 1800, many Frenchmen, who had been recalled, had the folly to resign in order to live as paupers in Milan rather than abandon the ties of their affection. "

Even if the young Beyle had to be content to admire the beautiful women from afar, even if he was present at conversations without taking part in them, even if he had but a glimpse and a guess at the ineffable pleasures which made the French officers " mad with happiness "—nevertheless to know for a certainty that these things existed was enough to fill him with ecstasy, and from now on his dream is to return one day to Milan to savour them without stint. The exultancy and sense of physical well-being which made him think that, from the bastion of Porta Orientale, he could see as far as the Cadore mountains, became crystallized in the remembrance of a city and in the face of a woman, and both of these he was to cherish in his heart for the rest of his life.

It was, indeed, in Milan that the seventeen-year-old young man from the provinces fell in love with one of the " twelve or fifteen women of the rarest beauty " of whom the city boasted in those days; this was the fascinating Angela Pietragrua, the daughter of a cloth merchant and wife of an employee of the Office of Weights and Measures. He was presented to her by his friend Joinville, who at that time was enjoying her favours, and Beyle, who was young, shy, proud and penniless, had to be content to worship her in silence. She meanwhile, too occupied in flirting with the gallant officers who thronged her father's shop near the Cathedral, never even noticed him. This love devoid of hope clouded the recollection of this first stay in Milan with melancholy, but made it even more dear to his heart. When, in September 1811, he finally returns to Milan after an absence of more than ten years, the thought of his sufferings for love of the beautiful Milanese woman stirs his emotions deeply, and he writes in his ' Journal ':

" My heart is bursting. Last night and today I have felt the sweetest sentiments. I feel like weeping. I arrived yesterday evening at about five o'clock; formalities connected with the customs and the inn took an hour, dinner about the same, and it was seven o'clock before I finally found myself on the Corso at Porta Orientale where, without using an empty phrase, I could say that I spent the golden dawn of my life. How vividly I recall my feelings then, and

The interior of the Scala Theatre at the beginning of the nineteenth century

how strongly I feel them now! In these thoughts there is no hint of ambition. All my heart goes out to Signora P[ietragrua], and, as for the rest of my existence in Milan, in M. Petiet's time, I can see the cause of every effect and I feel quite sorry for myself. Since I could not be loved by Signora [Pietragrua] because she was already loved by Louis Joinville , I imagined myself, in those millions of castles in the air which I had built for her, coming back one day a colonel, or having achieved some advancement far superior to that of an employee of M. D[aru]'s, to embrace her and then dissolve into tears.

" One must admit that my plan was not a complicated one, but it had something that makes those sort of plans succeed: it was full of sentiment, and I could not think of it without shedding a tear.

" This plan came to my mind yesterday when, after *eleven years*, I saw myself in the position which I had then so much desired.

" *Eleven years*—what a world of meaning in those words! My memories have not faded at all; indeed, they have been enlivened by an intense love. I cannot walk a step in Milan without recognising something; and, eleven years ago, I loved that something because it belonged to the town where she lived ... "

And so, after eleven years, he no sooner arrives than he rushes off to Contrada dei Meravigli to see Signora Pietragrua, who has certainly not spent all this time thinking of him, and at first does not even recognise him. Neverthe-

less, she is more beautiful than ever, and this time her lover is a noble Venetian. The month which Beyle now spends in Milan is only a stage of his journey to Rome and Naples, and he devotes it exclusively to the conquest of the fascinating Angelina. After buying himself a fine cane—" thus I no longer to have to hold my hands behind my back *like papa* "—he goes with her to see the paintings in the Brera Gallery, walks her round the Castello Sforzesco, and accompanies her to the Simonetta, a villa situated outside the city walls and famous for its echo. When alone, he goes to take coffee in Corsia dei Servi, visits the Royal Palace and contemplates Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' at the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. But he is too taken up with his love-affair, and the capricious Milanese woman resists his attentions for too long for him to be able to keep up his interest in the city, which seems suddenly to have lost its fascination for him. " Church bells, the arts, music etc. ", he explains, " are delightful things for the uncommitted heart, but they become empty and insipid when it is bursting with passion ". Finally, however, Angela becomes his, and Beyle, having duly noted the memorable date of his " victory "—21 September 1811—on his braces, leaves Milan.

The black mood into which he had fallen because of Signora Pietragrua even spoilt for him the inestimable pleasure he normally took in the performances at the Scala, where he went almost every evening; but this was only so that he could contemplate his beloved from the floor of the house, visit her in her box and furtively press her hand to his. And yet, when, on the first evening after he had arrived, he again set foot, after so many years, in that fabulous place, " as big as half of Place Grenette ", tears welled up in his eyes, and after the performance he wrote in his 'Journal': " This theatre has had a great influence upon my character. If I ever amuse myself by describing how my character was formed by the various events of my youth, the theatre *della Scala* shall have pride of place... " During his longest stay in Milan, protracted, with the occasional interval, over a period of at least seven years, from 1814 to 1821, he attended the théatre regularly and enthusiastically. " I adored opera in Italy ", he later wrote in his 'Souvenirs d'egotisme'. " The most incomparably sublime moments of my life have undoubtedly been spent in theatres. Through being happy at the *Scala* (the theatre in Milan), I became a sort of connoisseur ". But, in truth, it was not only music that attracted him there, for at the Scala the show was not confined to the stage; another, no less interesting and colourful show was presented by the floor and the boxes, where good Milanese society met every evening and the ladies held social gatherings, discussing music and literature—and gossiping. Both these shows were described by Stendhal with great effectiveness and wealth of detail in his 'Rome, Naples et Florence', which work we have ransacked for the benefit of the reader:

(Milan, 25 September 1816). " I hasten to the first theatre in the world: they are still giving *La Testa di bronzo*. I spent the whole time in admiration. The scene is set in Hungary; never was there a prouder, brisker, more generous and military Hungarian prince than Galli. He is one of the best actors

LA GAZZA LADRA

MELODRAMMA

DA RAPPRESENTARSI

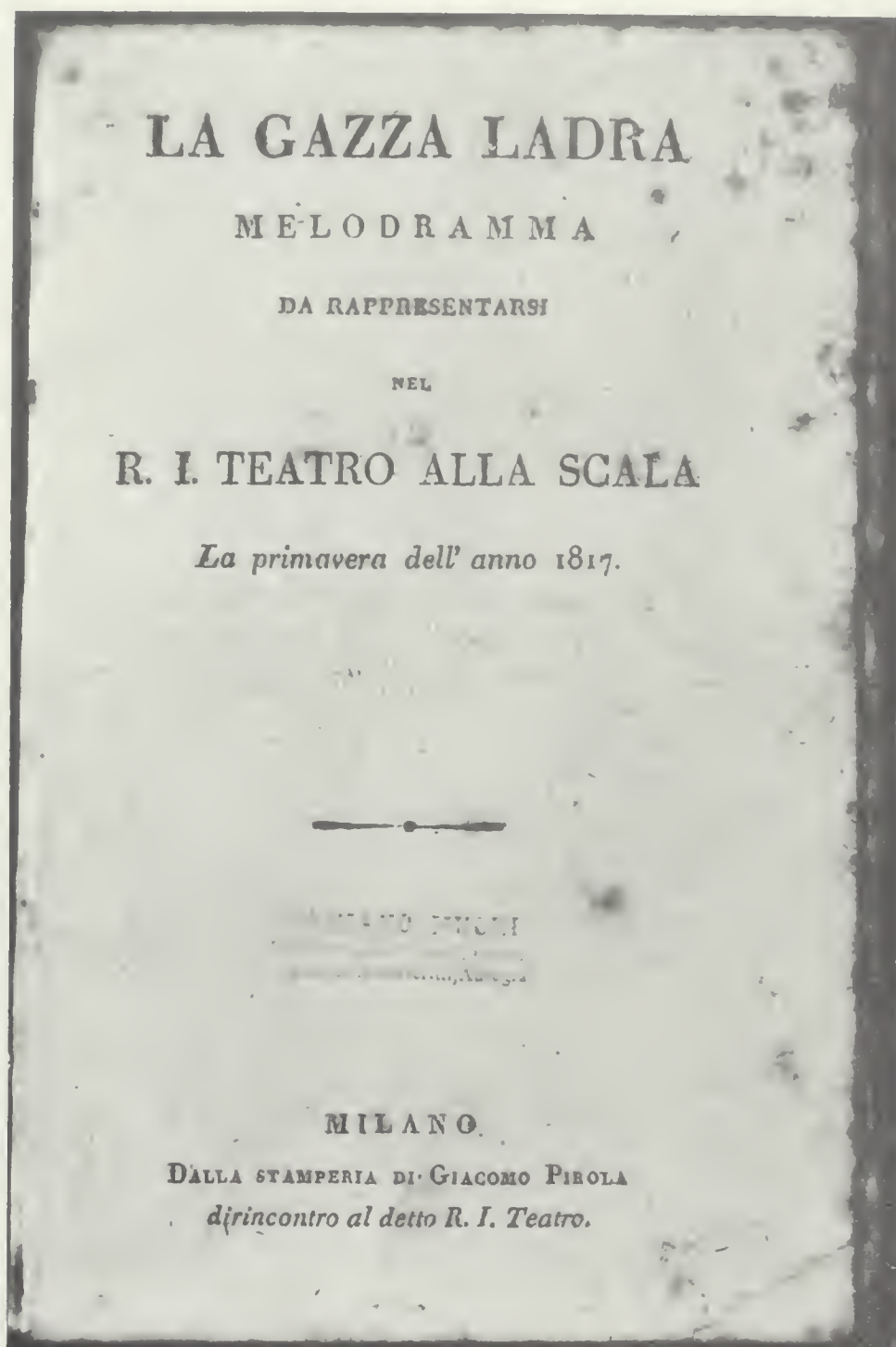
NEL

R. I. TEATRO ALLA SCALA

La primavera dell' anno 1817.

MILANO.

DALLA STAMPERIA DI GIACOMO PIROLA

dirincontro al detto R. I. Teatro.

The title page of the libretto of Rossini's 'Gazza Ladra'

I have ever encountered; he has the finest bass voice I have ever heard: it rings out into the very corridors of this immense theatre.

"What profound sense of colour there is in the way the costumes are chosen! Here I have seen Paolo Veronese's finest pictures. Galli, the Hungarian prince, is dressed in national costume, a brilliant red and gold hussar's uniform, while his prime minister is in black velvet, whose only bright ornament is the cross of his order; the prince's pupil, the charming Fabre, is arrayed in a sky-blue and silver fur and a cap topped by a white feather. The grandeur

and richness of this theatre fill the atmosphere; at every moment it is possible to see at least a hundred singers, or minor actors, all of them dressed as, in France, only the leading parts would be. For one of the recent ballets, they made a hundred and eighty-five costumes of velvet or satin. The expense is enormous. The *Scala* Theatre is the town's drawing-room. All social life takes place there; no house is open. 'We'll meet at the Scala', people say, for various kinds of business. One's first sight of the theatre is intoxicating. As I write this, I am quite carried away.

(Milan, 26 September, 1816) "... I have just come out of the *Scala.* I can only say that my admiration is undiminished. I would call the *Scala* the world's foremost theatre, because it is the one which gives the greatest pleasure by means of music. There is not a lamp in the auditorium; it is lit only by the light reflected by the scenery. It is impossible even to imagine anything greater, more magnificent, more imposing, and newer in the whole of architecture. This evening there were eleven changes of scenery. Now I am condemned to feel an eternal disgust for our theatres; this is indeed the disadvantage of travelling to Italy.

"I pay a sequin a night for a box in the third tier which I have promised to keep for the whole of my stay. Despite the complete lack of light, I have no trouble in distinguishing people entering the floor of the house. All round the theatre, from one box to the other, people greet each other. I am introduced in seven or eight different boxes. I find five or six persons in each of the latter with conversation in progress as it might be in a drawing-room. Their manners are completely natural and full of gentle gaiety; above all, there is no gravity ...

(4 October, 1816) "... Madame Catalani has arrived, and has announced that she will give four concerts. But there is one thing that shocks everybody; would you believe it—the tickets cost ten francs each. I saw a box full of people who have an income of eighty to a hundred thousand lire, and who, if the need arises, spend three times as much on their houses, complaining about the price of ten francs. Shows here cost nothing; in fact, thirty-six centesimi to holders of season-tickets. For this price, one has the first act of the opera, which lasts an hour; this starts at half-past seven in the winter, and at half-past eight in the summer; then there is the grand ballet, which takes an hour and a half; after the ballet comes the second act of the opera, taking three-quarters of an hour; finally, there is a short comic ballet, usually delightful, which sends you home dying with laughter at about half-past midnight or one o'clock. When one has paid forty pence for one's ticket, or entered the theatre for thirty-six centesimi, one goes and sits downstairs on fine, well-upholstered benches which have backs to them; there are eight or nine hundred seats of this sort. People who have a box go to receive their friends. Here a box is like a house and is sold for twenty to twenty-five thousand lire; the government gives two hundred thousand lire to the *impresario*, and he, for his own profit, lets the fifth and sixth tiers of boxes, which

bring him a hundred thousand lire; the tickets provide the rest. Under the French, the theatre also had gaming rooms which yielded six hundred thousand lire, to be spent on ballets and singers. The *Scala* can hold three thousand five hundred spectators. The floor of the house is normally half empty, which is what makes it so comfortable.
" In the boxes, about half-way through the evening, the ladies' escorts usually order ices; somebody has always bet something or other, and betting is always done in *sorbetti*, which taste divine. There are three sorts of these; *gelati, crepé,* and *pezzi duri*—it is well worth getting to know them. I have not yet decided which sort is best, and every evening I repeat my tasting ...

(Milan, 20 November, 1816) "... In the evening, the ladies receive their friends in their boxes from half-past eight until midnight. When the box, which has ten or twelve seats, is full, the first to come then leaves. Since this person was sitting next to the hostess, against the parapet of the box, all the others, on his departure, move up a little towards the parapet; thus the new-comer can find room near the door. By this means, each person has his turn to sit next the hostess. I saw a shy, love-smitten man leave as soon as his turn came to sit by his beloved, although she reciprocated his affection; it was a curious sight.
" The entrance hall of the *Scala* (the *atrio*) is a hotbed of coxcombs, and it is here that public opinion on women is formed. Each of the latter has attributed to her as a personal friend the man who gives her his arm in order to mount the stairs to her box. On the nights of the *première*, such an action is viewed as conclusive. A woman is held dishonoured when she is suspected of having a friend whom she cannot oblige to offer her his arm at half-past eight, when she ascends to her box. Yesterday I saw a man put up a vigorous resistance against rendering this small service to a woman friend: '*Mia cara*', he ended by saying, 'I am not lucky enough to have the right to give you my arm, and I do not wish it to look as though I were a substitute for M. F. ...' The woman stoutly denied having F. ... as a friend, but the man persisted. When a woman definitely has no man friend, her husband does escort duty. I saw a husband, who was very young and of exceeding good looks, complaining loudly of this embarassment. A husband is considered dishonoured if he is suspected of escorting his wife because she cannot persuade her friend to give her his arm to cross the *atrio*. Everything I have just related was even more true before 1796. Today, there are actually young women who dare go up into their boxes followed by a manservant, which appears the very depth of baseness to the ancient and aristocratic women.

(Milan, 16 July 1817) " I do not miss one evening at the *Scala* theatre and feel there again the same delightful sensations that I had in Bologna, heightened by all the charm of my regrets.
" This evening, I have seen the first performance of '*La Gazza ladra*' (the *Thievish Magpie*), with music by Rossini; also, 'Mirra', or 'The Revenge of Venus', a heroic ballet by Viganò, and 'Magic in the Woods', a comic ballet; all these were given on the same day. Words fail me in expressing the

pleasure which the scenery gave me. Messrs. Perego, Landriani, Fuentès and Sanquirico are the painters, and great painters too. Every piece of scenery, whose paint has a glue base, fetches no more than twenty sequins (or two hundred and forty francs); but the management undertakes to order twenty every year from each of these gentlemen. This evening, since it was a *prima recita* (1), all the women were in their boxes, arrayed in their finest attire; that is to say that their necks and arms were bare and they wore large hats, ornamented with huge and beautiful feathers; these are necessary, otherwise one does not notice them from the floor of the house. Complete silence reigned; no visits are paid on a *prima sera*; I perceived the bad construction of the floor: it is so flat that one cannot see the dancers' legs; they ought to imitate the floor of the Paris Opera.

" First performances always take place on Saturdays at the *Scala Theatre*, because Friday is the day of rest. There are no performances on the anniversaries of the birth or death of the last rulers of Austria, a fact which is extremely unpopular... "

Indeed, during those years, there were many other things which were unpopular with the Milanese, who, however, never gave up their traditional habit of the promenade in a carriage on the Corso:

" ... In summer, after dinner, at the end of the day, or, as they say here, at the hour of the *Ave Maria,* all the carriages for miles around are driven to the *Bastion di Porta Rense,* which rises thirty feet above the plain ... On Sundays, all the people come to see and admire the turnout of *their* nobility. Listening to the lower classes talking, I have often detected affection towards the former. The carpenter and the locksmith extend a friendly greeting to the servant who, for the last forty years, has been standing behind the carriage of *casa* Dugnani, and if the master catches sight of the *marangone di casa* (the household carpenter), he nods his head benignly. A beautiful woman's carriage is surrounded by dandies. Ladies of the nobility do not allow their bourgeois friends to pay court to them in public in this way. Elderly women engage in a peculiar type of conversation with their valets, whose place, as soon as the carriage stops, is by the door, to open it in case madame should wish to go for a walk, which does not happen once in ten years. Standing thus two paces from the door, the valet can answer the remarks of his old *padrona,* made from the inside of the carriage, without coming forward. It was once, when listening to one of these conversations, that I heard the Simplon road, made by *quel maledett Bonapart* (2), blamed for being the cause of the prematurely cold weather experienced in Lombardy *since the Revolution.* Since nothing here equals the ignorance of the noble ladies, they imagine that the chain of the Alps, which can sometimes be seen from the *Corso,* forms a wall against the north wind, and that Bonaparte, that pet aversion of their confessors, blew a breach in this wall in order to clear his path from the Simplon ...

(1) First performance.
(2) Milanese dialect: that cursed Bonaparte.

" The Milanese are proud of the number of carriages which adorn their *Corso*. One day of high holiday and bright sun, I saw four lines of carriages which had halted on both sides of this wide road, and in the middle two lines of carriages on the move, all these vehicles being controlled and directed by ten Austrian hussars; the scene was completed by two hundred young men on horseback and two thousand on foot; the walkers were saying proudly: *This is almost as grand as Paris: there are more than three thousand carriages ...* "

It is not difficult to perceive the difference in tone in this, Stendhal's second description of the Corso. It lacks the vivacity, animation and gaiety conferred on the first description by the presence of young and carefree French officers, engaged only in amusing themselves after their battles and victories, and enamoured of the city and its women who had received them as liberators. Now, in their place, there are Austrian soldiers, towards whom the populace has rather different feelings.
As for Stendhal, he is now no more than an official forced into retirement by the restoration. With the fall of Napoleon, he witnessed a whole world crumbling around him, and he came to seek refuge in Italy, where so many things attracted him—the climate, the music, the arts— and where, without doubt, life was less expensive than in France. Naturally, he settled in Milan. Free from every commitment and with a reasonable income, he was at last able to lead the life of which he had always dreamt: to write books, visit " the most beautiful places in the world ", listen to sweet melodies, love and suffer love's pangs. These were his occupations during his long stay in Milan, which he always remembered in after years as an oasis of serenity in an otherwise restless life.
At last, he had plenty of time and leisure to visit the city that sheltered him, walk along its streets, " the best in the world and without mud ", and admire, almost with emotion, the beautiful women whom he met.
For example, he was able to contemplate Milan Cathedral which, even if it had not fascinated him " at first glance ", now filled him more and more with admiration. Signora M ... V..., who, like many Milanese women, was " similar, but superior, to Leonardo da Vinci's enchanting *Erodiade* ", advised him to go and see the great church at night, by moonlight:
" ... I experienced the most wonderful silence there. Those pyramids of white marble, so gothic and slender, shoot up into the air and stand out against the dark blue southern sky, dotted with its twinkling stars, thus presenting a sight which is unique in the world. Furthermore, the sky had a velvet texture which accorded well with the serene rays of a beautiful moon. A warm breeze wafted through the narrow lanes which run round the massive cathedral on some of its sides. A rapturous moment.
" It is to Napoleon that we owe the semi-gothic façade and all the pinnacles (*guglie*) on the south side, towards the *Palazzo Regio* (1805-1810). The highest pinnacle, a tracery of white marble, is carved out so that the daylight shines through and can be seen from a distance of several leagues; it bears the colossal statue of the Madonna and was erected in the reign of Maria Teresa.

" Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who, after conquering and capturing his uncle Barnabò, then had him poisoned in the picturesque castle of Trezzo, founded Milan cathedral (*il Duomo*) in 1386—possibly to appease the Virgin...
" On the outside pillars of this enormous mass of gothic architecture, the artists of the fourteenth century carved more than two thousand niches of all sizes, in which were placed as many statues. Some of these statues, situated a hundred feet above the ground, are no more than thirty inches in height. Behind the high altar there are windows measuring sixty feet high by thirty feet wide. But the coloured glass gives the five *navate* (naves) of the interior a noble sombreness well suited to the religion that preaches eternal hell.
" Near the high altar, on the south side, an underground passage is open to the public; this leads from the interior of the church to the gateway of the courtyard of the Archbishop's palace. People who wish to meet unseen can do so here as though by chance. The coachman and the lackey, who perhaps, are spies, wait at the gates of the church. Beside this passage, the *cicerone* (guide), draws one's attention to a statue of Saint Bartholomew; this has peeled so that it looks as though the saint is gaily sporting his skin like a bandolier; this statue is held in high esteem by the vulgar, and could figure with advantage in a hospital amphitheatre if it were not full of mistakes in anatomy. I said that this evening in Madame M...'s box, and everyone was silent. I could see that I had offended their *patriotisme d'antichambre* and hastened to leave. Generally speaking, in Italian society, even the most witty, one must behave as at court and never criticize anything which is Italian. "

Milan. Porta Orientale

Having been able to admire the Duomo by night and the light of the moon, Stendhal finds it all decorated the next morning, for it is the third of November:

" Immense preparations are going on for the feast, tomorrow, of *San Carlo,* who is, after or before the Madonna, truly the idol of the Milanese. The Cathedral's enormous gothic pillars are draped at their base in red damask. Thirty feet up are hung a number of great pictures representing the main facts of the life of Saint Charles. I spent two hours amid the workmen listening to their talk. At each moment one can hear Napoleon, and then Saint Charles, mentioned. Both are adored.
" Since I feel disposed to look at churches, I have been to visit the famous Church of the Madonna, near *Porta di San Celso.* This curious edifice reminds one in its form of the primitive Christian churches, now long forgotten. Just as in the theatres of today, there were five or six different kinds of seat, appropriate to the varying status of the souls of the faithful. I admired the church, its little internal portico, and the four pendentives painted with frescoes by Appiani.
On my way back, I saw the magnificent ancient pillars of *San Lorenzo.* There are sixteen of them. They are ranged in a straight line, grooved and of the Corinthian type; they are twenty-five to thirty feet high. In order to admire them, one must have an eye already practiced in separating ruins of venerable antiquity from the rubbish which puerile modernity has superimposed upon them. Ruins should be enclosed by iron railings, like a bed of flowers in the Tuilerie Gardens, and, if they crumble, reinforced by iron clamps or a brick support, painted dark green, as they tell me has been done with the Colosseum in Rome. The Church of *San Lorenzo,* built behind sixteen ancient columns, amused me with its original shape. "

On the feast of San Carlo, Stendhal was invited to eat chick peas at the house of Signora C.... The evening before, at the Caffè dell'Accademia, they had discussed this Milanese custom, and his friend Isimbardi had said to him: " What genius of a priest was it who once established the custom of eating chick peas on the fourth of November, the feast of Saint Charles? Even a child of four is impressed by this and therefore adores Saint Charles. " Stendhal comments: " M. Melchiorre Gioia thinks that these chick peas are a remnant of paganism... "

It was Signora Marini who procured for Stendhal a ticket for the ball held by the Shopkeepers Club, situated in Via San Paolo:

" Armed with my ticket, and speaking *broad* Milanese, I have succeeded in persuading the porter to let me see the rooms. The air of affability which one must assume here, and the fact that I am French, have even more effect than the *mancia* (tip). The rich Milan shopkeepers, whose quiet common sense and liking for good solid comfort without ostentation remind me of the Dutch character, have banded together, four hundred of them, in order to buy, at

a most advantageous price, what is known here as a *palazzo,* in Via San Paolo. It is a big house, built of stones which time has blackened. The façade is no mere flat wall like than of the Paris houses. At ground level there are some Etruscan pillars, while the first floor has some pilasters. It is somewhat like what is known in Paris as the *Palace* of the *Chamber* of Peers. By having this house *scraped*, they removed from its architecture all its traditional charm, which was entirely appropriate for an aristocratic chamber. If it could possibly have entered the heads of the Milan shopkeepers to perpetrate a similar outrage on their *casin* in Via San Paolo, all the shoemakers and carpenters who have their shops in this street, one of the busiest in town, would have laughed them to scorn ...

" Here they have a committee *di ornato* (for ornament); this is an honorary committee, consisting of four or five citizens, known for their love of the fine arts, and two architects. Every time the owner of a house carries out some work on his frontage, he is obliged to submit his plan to the municipality, which passes it on to the committee. The latter gives its opinion, and should the owner wish to do something excessively ugly, the members of the committee for ornament, people of some consequence, make sport of him in their conversations. This people, born to appreciate that which is *beautiful*, and with whom, in any case, it is dangerous or frustrating to speak of politics, may well spend a month on end debating the beauty of the frontage of a new house. People's habits of thought in Milan are completely republican, and the Italy of today is nothing but a continuation of the Middle Ages. To have a fine house in town earns greater esteem than millions in one's pocket. If a house is remarkable for its beauty, it immediately takes the name of its owner. Thus they say: the law courts are in such and such a street, in *casa Clerici* ...

" Architecture in Italy seems to me more alive than painting or sculpture. A Milanese banker will be miserly for fifty years of his life in order to finish building a house whose façade will cost him a hundred thousand francs more than if it consisted of an ordinary wall. It is the secret ambition of all the citizens of Milan to build a house, or at least to renovate the façade of that which they have inherited from their fathers ...

" Of all the cities in Europe, Milan has the best streets, and the courtyards inside the houses, too, are the finest. The square courtyards are, as in ancient Greece, surrounded by porticos of beautiful granite pillars. In Milan, there are perhaps twenty thousand granite pillars, quarried at Baveno on Lake Maggiore. They arrive here by means of the famous canal which joins the rivers Adda and Ticino. Leonardo da Vinci worked on this canal in 1496; in those days we were still barbaric, like the whole of the North ... "

Every day, Stendhal would leave his home, situated in Corsia del Giardino [1] on the corner of Via Andegari, walk slowly along Via Santa Margherita and Via dei Mercanti d'Oro, cross Piazza del Duomo, collect his post from the

(1) Today Via Manzoni.

post office and enter Corsia dei Servi, " where it is unheard of not to meet, towards midday, one or more of the twelve prettiest women in Milan ". However, sometimes he would vary his route:

" This morning I returned to *Sant'Ambrogio* to look at the mosaic of the vaulted roof over the choir. I had another look at the attractive façade of the church of *Madonna di San Celso* by the architect Alessi. The portico, which breathes an indefinable air of ancient simplicity combined with medieval melancholy, is by Bramante, Raphael's uncle. What I like most about Milan are the courtyards inside the buildings. They have crowds of pillars, and for me pillars are to architecture what song is to music.
" Because of some feast or other, I have seen exhibited, under the magnificent portico of the *Ospedale Grande,* the full-length portraits of all the benefactors who gave a hundred thousand *lire* (or seventy-six thousand francs) to the poor, while those who have given less have only bust-length portraits. Formerly, all high-born assassins who succeeded in reaching old age, gave large sums to the poor, and now the same is done by women who are growing old and are guilty of an excessively amorous past. The portraits, painted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are of a degree of bad taste which it would be difficult to imagine in France; few of them are passable, and only one is good; this was painted recently by Hayez, a young Venetian, who knows how to make use of light and shade and colour, and conveys an impression of strength ... "

Apart from visits to monuments, walks on the Corso and evenings at the Scala, Stendhal does not lack other amusements. He goes on excursions to the outskirts of the city, has picnics at the Cascina dei Pomi, plays games of taroc, and, when he has absolutely nothing else to do, reads Verri's 'History of Milan', which, he says, is " as interesting as a novel by Walter Scott ". Indeed, even if he were not really happy, one might think him, at least, at peace with the world. However, as usual, he is lovesick.
For Angela Pietragrua showed no pleasure whatever at seeing him settle in Milan; furthermore, she now and again compelled him to remove himself from the city, banishing him to Genoa, Turin or Venice. Angela's whims, changes of humour and betrayals ended by driving Stendhal to desperation; he became ill through her and even meditated suicide. However, more wisely, he decided to leave her and to seek solace in work. " In 1814 ", he later wrote to Louis Crozet, " assailed by a storm of passion, I was on the point of bidding goodbye to my company, and, from 22 December 1814 to 6 January 1815 ... I worked from four to six hours a day, and in two years of illness and torment I composed two volumes [1] ". It was not until 1818 that another woman came to fill the void left in his heart; this was Mathilde Viscontini, to whom he always refers in his works as Métilde, the daughter of a rich middle-class Milanese. When Stendhal met her, she already had

(1) This refers to the author's 'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie'.

two children and was living apart from her husband, General Demboscki. Stendhal cherished the tenderest and most profound feelings of his life for this Milanese woman, whose beauty " it was impossible to forget after seeing her but once ", and whom we can recognize in the person of Francesca Polo in his ' Promenades '. But he never succeeded in knowing what she felt for him, and this uncertainty, added to his alternating hope and despair, embittered the last three years of his stay in Milan. " ... Ah, me, I am dominated by a cruel passion which will not let me be master of my own actions... ", he writes despairingly to Mathilde, whom he has just followed to Volterra, only to receive a tart reproof. Why is it that the " sublime Métilde " is so unkind to her lover who writes her letters overflowing with sincere affection and gives her so many proofs of his devotion? When, in 1819, he returns from Grenoble, where he went because of his father's death, she delivers the final blow by informing him that from henceforth she will receive him in her drawing-room only twice a month ...

By this time, however, Mathilde was not the only cause of his misfortune; there were other, more considerable ones. Someone who bore him a grudge had denounced him to the Milanese patriots as a spy in the pay of the government. This was a terrible and unexpected blow for Stendhal. The Milanese liberals had always shown him friendship and knew him well. For long past they had met him every evening at the Scala, in the box of Monsignor Ludovico di Breme. As he himself writes in his ' Rome, Naples et Florence ':

" Every day I visit the box of Monsignor di Breme at the *Scala*. There one only meets men of letters, and there are never any ladies ... I bring them news about France, tell them stories about the retreat from Moscow, about Napoleon, about the Bourbons, and they repay me with news about Italy. Here I meet Monti, the greatest living poet, although his mind is quite illogical. When we incite him to anger about something, his eloquence is sublime. Monti is fifty-five and still a very good-looking man ...

" Silvio Pellico, a well-educated man and full of goods sense, does not perhaps express himself so magnificently nor so forcefully as Monti—and, be it said, in literature force is synonymous with influence, effect on the public and merit. Signor Pellico is very young and is unlucky enough to be no more than a man *totally without means*, whom a callous fate has endowed with a soft and generous heart, instead of the brazen face of an intriguer ...

" In Monsignor di Breme's box, I often find Signor Borsieri; he has a French wit, full of vivacity and daring. The Marquis Ermes Visconti has ideas which are very just and clear, although he is a great admirer of Kant.

" If one wished to name Italy's greatest philosopher, I believe one would have to choose between the Marquis Visconti and Signor Gioia, the author of ten volumes in 4^{to}, who is everyday threatened with imprisonment ...

" Signor Confalonieri, a brave man who loves his country, often comes to Monsignor di Breme's box. Signor Crisostomo [1] Berchet has translated some of Burger's poems into Italian very well ... "

(1) Actually, *Giovanni* Berchet.

How can all these people possibly suspect Stendhal? Nevertheless, in an anxious letter which he writes to Alphonse de Mareste, he justifies their mistrust:

Milan 23 July, 1820

"My dear friend, the greatest misfortune that could possibly have descended on my head has now befallen me. Someone who is jealous—and no one is devoid of jealousy—has spread the rumour that I am an agent of the French government... For when one comes to think of it, what would this Frenchman be doing here? The good Milanese will never be able to understand my philosopher's life and the fact that, for five thousand francs, I lead a better existence here than in Paris on twelve thousand... Give me your opinion; what can I do to enlighten my acquaintances? I am too upset to speak of anything else. Be assured that I am not exaggerating this matter. There is one company where I have not been admitted for three months because an impartial person said: 'If he comes, several people (of course these are people who hate me) will retire'. I only heard this two hours ago. It is the hardest blow I have ever had in my life..."

But the Austrian police, too, are suspicious of him because of his connection with the liberals. They have him watched and censor his letters, which forces Stendhal to take a thousand precautions, to sign his letters with different pseudonyms and to conceal the identity of those of whom he speaks with nicknames or initials. Gradually, however, he comes to realize that it is impossible to stay in Milan, and he writes to his faithful friend, de Mareste:

Saturday evening, Ist. April (1821)

"*I believe, my dear friend, that I have* enfin *took* la plus pénible résolution *in all my life, that of coming back to Bruxelles's hotel* ... Rien au monde ne peut être plus pénible pour moi..." (1)

We will not give ourselves up to facile sentimentality on the subject of Stendhal's departure. Let us only remember that Milan, apart from being dear to him for the hundred reasons that we already know, is now also the city where Métilde lives, and let us leave it to him to re-evoke his last farewell to the town and to the woman he loved:

"...I left Milan for Paris, on [13] June 1821, with the sum of 3,500 francs, if I remember rightly, and thinking that the only good turn I could now do myself would be to blow my brains out when this money was expended. After three years of intimate friendship, I was leaving a woman I adored, who loved me and who never gave herself to me.

"Now that so many years have passed, I still try to understand the reasons for her behaviour. Great dishonour was done to her, and yet she only ever

(1) Sic. This passage, all in English, would read: "I believe, my dear friend, that I have at last taken the most painful decision in all my life, that of coming back to the Brussels Hotel. Nothing in the world could be more painful for me...".

had one lover; but the women of respectable Milanese society took revenge on her superiority. Poor Métilde never knew how to manoeuvre against this enemy, nor did she know how to despise them. One day, perhaps, when I am old and grey, and my heart is chilled with age, I shall have the courage to speak of the years 1818, 1819, 1820 and 1821.

"In 1821, it needed a great effort to resist the temptation to blow my brains out. I drew a pistol in the margin of a second-rate love drama which I was sketching at the time (when I lodged in *casa* Acerbi). It seems to me that it was political curiosity which prevented me from putting an end to myself; but perhaps, without my being aware of it, it was also that I was afraid of hurting myself.

"At last, I took leave of Métilde.

'When will you come back?' she said.

'Never, I hope.'

"Then we had one last hour of putting the clock back and vain words; but one might have changed my future life, but alas! not for long, for that angelic soul, concealed within so beautiful a form, departed this life in 1825.

"Finally, I left, in a state that can well be imagined, on the... of June. I travelled from Milano to Como, fearing at every moment, and indeed believing, that I should retrace my steps. This was the town where I believed that I must not only live, but also die, and I could not leave it without feeling that my soul was being wrenched out of me; I seemed to be leaving my life behind— but what am I saying? What was life as compared to Métilde? I expired with every step of my departure.

"I breathed only as I sighed (Shelley)..." (1)

"In Milan, in 1820, I wanted to put this on my grave. I thought of this inscription every day, indeed believing that only in the grave should I find peace. I wanted a marble tablet, in the shape of a playing-card."

ERRICO BEYLE
MILANESE
VISSE, SCRISSE, AMO'
QUEST'ANIMA
ADORAVA
CIMAROSA, MOZART E SHAKESPEARE
MORI' DI ANNI.....
IL... 18... (2)

(1) Translated from Stendhal's French.

(2) "Henry Beyle, Milanese, lived, died and loved; this soul adored Cimarosa, Mozart and Shakespeare. He died at the age of..., in... 18... ".

MILAN:

"... An admirable view of Milan Cathedral, whose white marble, standing up above the houses of the town, appears in relief against the Alps... This intricate work of man, this forest of marble pinnacles, doubles the picturesque effect of the Alps, whose splendid outline is seen against the sky". What would Stendhal say to the skyscrapers that today obtrude upon that panorama which he loved so much?

MILAN:

The façade of the Cathedral, declares Stendhal, "should be seen illuminated by the red glow of the setting sun". However, he often went to contemplate the Cathedral at night-time: "In bright moonlight this church offers a sight of breathtaking beauty which is unique in the world".

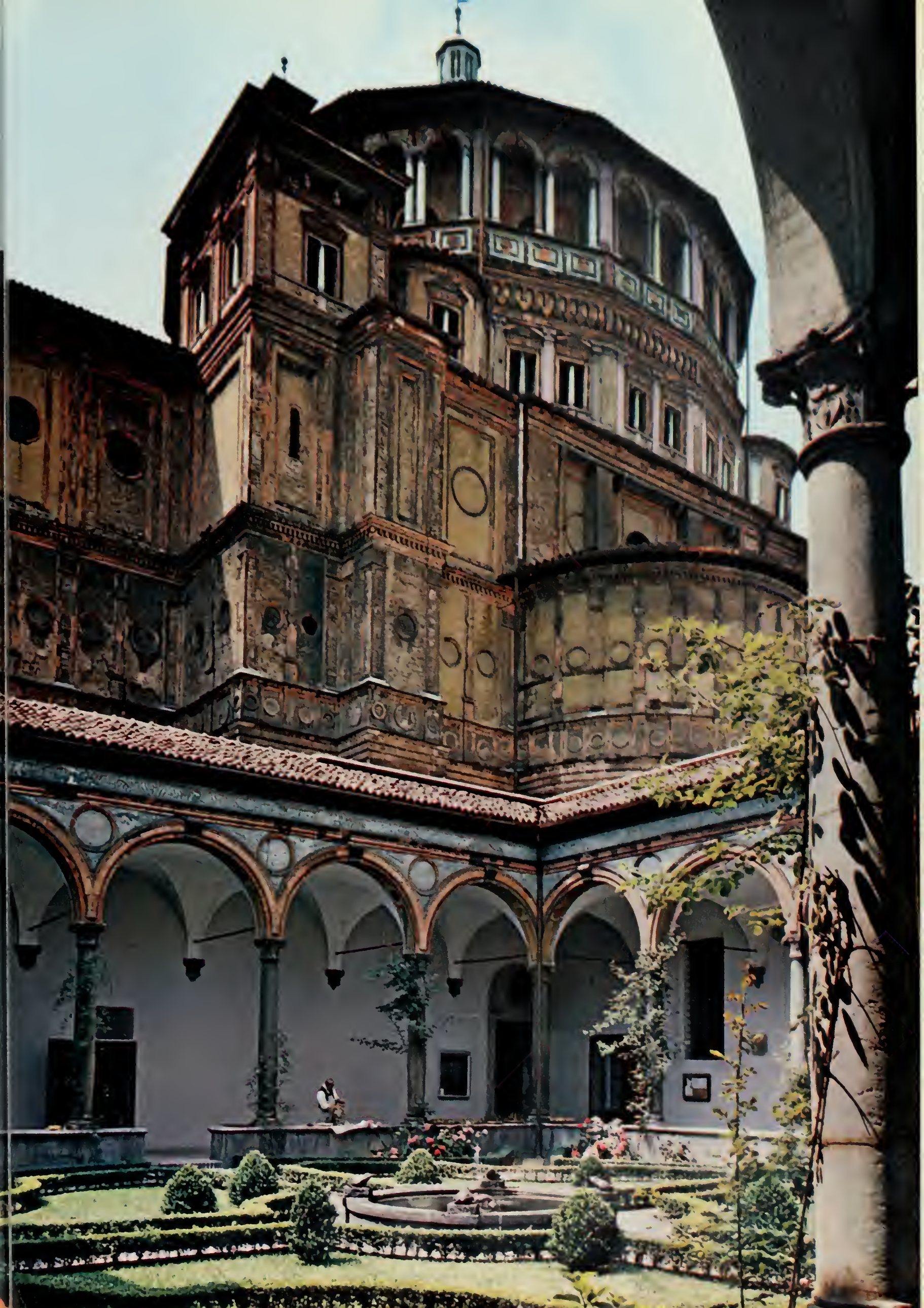
MILAN:

The Scala Theatre, the most famous Italian lyric theatre and, according to Stendhal, "the greatest theatre in the world", is above all renowned for its vast auditorium and perfect acoustics. "It is impossible even to imagine anything greater, more magnificent and more impressive...", wrote Stendhal, who went there every evening.

MILAN:

The Ospedale Maggiore, or "Ospedale Grande", was founded in 1456 by Francesco Sforza; besides the inner courtyard with its "magnificent portico", admired by Stendhal, it possesses a splendid façade with characteristic windows, decorated in terracotta. The custom of exhibiting the portraits of benefactors under its arcades once a year is still practised today.

MILAN:

The cloister of Santa Maria delle Grazie and the apse which dominates it are the work of Bramante, who built them for Ludovico il Moro. The refectory of the former Dominican convent, adjacent to the church, is the repository of Leonardo da Vinci's famous 'Last Supper'. Stendhal never missed going to contemplate this work, sometimes at frequent intervals, during his stays in Milan.

MILAN:

The sixteen "magnificent ancient pillars of San Lorenzo" were taken from a building of the second or third century, and represent the most outstanding remains of the Roman era in Milan. The Basilica, which Stendhal found amusing because of its "original shape", was built in the fourth century, after which it underwent numerous changes. The church nevertheless retains its primitive structure, which goes back to the earliest Christian times.

MILAN:

The Sforza Castle was built by Francesco Sforza on the ruins of the Visconti fortress. Famous artists, including Bramante and Leonardo da Vinci, had a part in its construction. The Castle was the focal point round which took place "the conspiracies, assassinations for motives of ambition, love or vengeance, and the popular uprisings" which, according to Stendhal, make the history of Milan since 1063, "as interesting as a Walter Scott novel".

MILAN:

On 30 April, 1801, Stendhal noted that on the parade ground behind the Castle "there has been a great celebration of peace". To-day, on the former site of the parade ground, there is a vast green park, dominated in the background by the Filarete Tower.

MILAN:

The Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio was built in the fourth century by the great bishop and saint who became the patron of Milan and who, according to Stendhal, "has in his favour the fact that he made Carnival time four days longer". The mosaic of the vaulted roof over the choir is an Italo-Byzantine treasure of the twelfth century.

LAKE MAGGIORE

Milan, July-August 1800

" My Dear Pauline ... I recently made quite a pleasant journey, which for a few days took me away from the burning streets of this city. I went with D[aru] to take possession of the fortress of Arona, and took the opportunity to visit the divine Borromean Islands; there are three of them: *Isola Bella, Isola Madre*, and *Isola dei Pescatori.* Try to imagine a semi-circular lake, fifteen leagues or so in length, with the part facing towards Milan, or rather towards Buffalora, surrounded by charming hills. The Ticino, a splendid river, flows out of the lake at this point; as one sails out over these peaceful waters, the hills become mountains, and that part of the lake which is next to Switzerland is encircled by beetling crags reminiscent of the St. Bernard Pass. These shores are quiet; there are few houses, no cultivation and no sign of those detestable trellises and palisades which disfigure the famous banks of the Lake of Geneva. Everywhere nature predominates; from time to time, one meets a little boat manned by two fishermen, and the journey continues in this way for another hour and a half. All of a sudden, the boat turns and one finds oneself at the foot of the fortress of the town of Arona. I have never seen a more impressive sight. Imagine an escarpment like that of Porte de France at Grenoble on one side; on the other side, the slope is fairly gradual, while, at the top, there stands an impregnable fort, surrounded by five rings of fortifications which render access impossible; there is a slender, lofty tower, surmounted by the tricolore. Suddenly, nineteen cannon shots ring out, and a rain of earth falls on the lake, for a moment sullying its clear waters. We come down again after battling for three quarters of an hour against quite a strong gale. The next morning, after visiting the fort, we re-embark on an Austrian cannon-craft. We issue forth from a little harbour, almost surrounded by water, and, as soon as we are out in the open, are struck by the superb statue of good St. Charles, which is sixty-nine feet high and stands on a twenty-foot pedestal; the statue points one hand majestically at the harbour, while with the other St. Charles holds a fold of his surplice; it is through this fold that one enters the statue. A man can stand upright in the nose of the statue, which calmly dominates the lake. Nothing had come to trouble

The giant statue of St. Charles at Arona

the monument for a long time until latterly when, at the seige of Arona, it was hit in the chest by a cannon ball; fortunately it was not damaged. I have never seen such a beautiful view; words fail to describe my feelings. We drifted on peacefully; I was beside the admiral of the enemy fleet and made conversation with an aide-de-camp of Mélas; he was a charming young man, apart from one or two prejudices. After three hours, we perceived, in the middle of this divine lake, a green mountain, and, to the right, a beach and a little white house. The island on the left is Isola Bella, that on the right Isola Madre ... "

The first Italian lake to be discovered by Stendhal, and to seduce him, was thus Lake Maggiore. Indeed, little more than a month after his arrival in Milan, his cousin Pierre Daru took him to Arona; the latter was going there to take possession of the fortress which, in accordance with the convention signed after the Battle of Marengo, the Austrians were to hand over, together with six others, to Napoleon. Young Beyle was undoubtedly very proud to take part in this mission, and, as we have seen, he writes with evident pleasure to his sister. However, in the letter recording the expedition, greater prominence is given to an enthusiastic description of the places which he visited. " Divine " is obviously the adjective which seems to him best suited to the lake and its islands, and consequently, every time he speaks of them, he finds new, still more effective terms of praise. Thus, in his ' Promenades ', he says: " What can I say of Lake Maggiore, the Borromean Islands, and Lake Como as well, except to pity those who are not in love with them? "
Stendhal made his first return to Isola Bella in 1811. On this occasion,

Signora Pietragrua had hastened to send him there from Sacro Monte, for she feared the jealousy of her husband. No place could be better suited for consoling Stendhal for the disappointment caused him by Angela's tepid welcome. The countryside around him is such as to make him forget all his griefs. Indeed, there is no longer any trace of bitterness or resentment in the lines which he writes that evening in his ' Journal ', while his admiration remains unbounded:

Written on Isola Bella, on 25 October, 1811, at 9 o'clock in the evening

" ... The view from the terrace is delightful. On the left lies Isola Madre and part of Pallanza; that is, the branch of the lake which eventually enters Switzerland; opposite me lies Laveno, and, on the right, the Sesto branch of the lake.
" I can see five or six outlines of mountains, all veiled in cloud.
" This panorama can be paired with that of the Bay of Naples and is far more moving. These islands seem to me to arouse a stronger sense of what is beautiful than Saint Peter's.
" In a word, my heart, moved, by love of what is too beautiful, to criticize what is less so, has found something which is above all criticism: the country between Varese and Laveno, and probably all the hills of Brianza ... "

It was on Isola Bella that Stendhal took refuge in 1828, when the Austrian police forbade him to stay in Milan. It was to this lake, where he had first come as a conqueror, that the enemy of bygone days compelled him to return, exiling him from the city he loved. However, even if, this time, the grief which he has to endure is of a different kind, the sight of the " delicious shores of the most beautiful lake in the world " consoles him anew and restores to him some of his peace of mind. It is here that he writes to Alphonse Gonssolin:

Isola Bella, 17 June

" This is one of the Borromean Islands, where there is a passable inn bearing the sign of Delfino, a name which is dear to all Frenchmen. That is why I have been staying here for two days, reading Bandello and a compact volume of *l'Esprit des Lois* ... When I arrived in Milan, the police told me that they had it on good authority that Stendhal and Beyle were synonyms, by virtue of which they requested me to vacate the domains of his Apostolic Majesty within twelve hours. Never have my Milan friends been so good to me. Many wanted to answer for me and stand surety for me. I refused, and so here I am at the foot of the Simplon ... "

He knows very well that it will be difficult indeed for him ever to return to Milan, the city that he loves most in the world; but perhaps his stay on this island, before returning to his native country, will have served somewhat to sweeten his cup of bitterness.

LAKE MAGGIORE:

The "divine Borromean Islands", situated "in the middle of this divine lake", are four in number. The best known are Isola Bella, Isola dei Pescatori and, a little further away, Isola Madre. On the shores of the lake can be seen Stresa, and Baveno with its granite quarries.

LAKE MAGGIORE:

"... After crossing the lake for an hour and a quarter, I landed on Isola Madre, which I took half an hour to see". Even though today the island can be reached far quicker, Isola Madre has kept its lonely, romantic atmosphere, which no doubt enchanted Stendhal.

LAKE MAGGIORE:

"On Isola Bella, one of the most marvellous places in the world", declares Stendhal, "there is a famous garden, created, in 1660, by Count Vitaliano Borromeo". The Borromeo palace, too, has a splendid interior, and there is a "delicious view" of the lake and the other islands to be enjoyed from the terrace.

LAKE MAGGIORE:

"From time to time, one dhal tells us. These were certainly the characteristic boats of Lake Maggiore, similar to those which here rock gently at their moorings on Isola dei Pescatori.

LAKE MAGGIORE:

From the little harbour of the Borromeo palace, on Isola Bella, one can admire Isola dei Pescatori; the mountains overlooking Lake Maggiore on the Swiss side serve as a fine backcloth. "These islands", wrote Stendhal, "seem to me to arouse a stronger sense of what is beautiful than St. Peter's".

LAKE MAGGIORE:

"... Try to imagine a semicircular lake, fifteen leagues or so in length, with the part facing towards Milan, or rather towards Buffalora, surrounded by charming hills. The Ticino, a splendid river, flows out of the lake at this point".

VARESE

At Varese, or rather up at Sacro Monte, above the town, Stendhal was the hero of an adventure which might have been taken from a story by Bandello, of the sort, that is, which he himself liked reading so much, but which he perhaps found less amusing to experience.

In October 1811, one month after his conquest of the fair Angela, Stendhal, impatient to see his beloved again, returned in great haste to Milan after a rapid visit to Rome and Naples. Signora Pietragrua, however, was not in town; she had gone with her husband to spend a few days at the Madonna del Monte. Stendhal lost no time, and the next day set out for Varese. In order not to arouse suspicion, he decided to say that he was looking for a man friend in those parts. Many had been the moments, during his return journey from Rome, when he had dreamt of embracing his Angela once more; he had promised himself such exquisite pleasure from their meeting. Unfortunately, however, things were to turn out differently:

Written at Varese, Thursday, 24 October, 1811

"Yesterday, the twenty-third, I thought I was pursuing a wise policy, and, full of an amorous enthusiasm which disturbed my soul, yet left me with that cool purpose of a man who means to win a difficult prize, I left Milan at half-past two for Varese.

"I arrived at Varese at half-past eight. I had never read Ossian, and for the first time read his *Fingal* in the carriage. This day and my adventures have indeed been reminiscent of Ossian.

"At six o'clock, I left on horseback for the Madonna del Monte. I reached this lofty, remarkable place over hills that were as beautiful as any that I had ever imagined in my youth. The appearance of the village which has grown up round the church of the Madonna is singular. The mountains are majestic. The distance from Varese to the village is four miles.

"After two miles, one sees the Lake of Varese, and, a mile higher up, that of Arona (Lake Maggiore).

"The sun was rising, surrounded in mist. The lower hills were like islands amid a sea of white clouds.

"I was in no mind to stop and look at these sights. I thought only that if ever I wished to live for a few months in the very midst of nature, I must come

to Sant'Ambrogio, a mile outside Varese, which is a small town, while Sant'Ambrogio is but a village.

" After completing two thirds of my journey, I got off my horse, because he kept slipping and I wanted to reach my destination more quickly.

" I perceive Signor P[ietragrua] [*il marito*], coming down the hill. He receives me amiably. I hasten up the hill, and am at last in the village. They tell me to go up some steps to get to the inn. I arrive at a church which is very ornate and where the office of the day is being chanted.

" I come down again. I ask where Signora P[ietragrua] is. At last I see her. I have no time to describe what took place in my heart.

" It must be remembered that it was for her that I had been pleased to leave Naples and Rome.

" I did not say those sweet affectionate things to her which I had thought in the stage coach between Rome and Foligno. My heart was troubled. I wanted to kiss her, but she told me to remember that this was not the custom of her country.

" She asked me if I knew of everything that had happened, how she had been appallingly compromised, that our meetings at the Alamanni baths had been found out, that her infernal little chambermaid, who was the object of the passion of Monsieur Turenne, had betrayed her, etc., and whether I had received her letter?

" Then she had a quarrel to pick with me. As I had requested her, she had opened Faure's letters, and had concluded from them that I had planned, in advance, to add her to my list when I came to Milan. I have just read Faure's letters carefully, and they prove nothing but my love for Signora P[ietragrua]. There is only one phrase which could have seemed ambiguous to the amiable Angela. But I intend to make her read it again and admit that this phrase is but one more proof of my love for her.

" I was none too sure of what I was doing. I took chocolate with her and we went for a walk. There is not a wood on this mountain.

" Travelling by night from Rome to Foligno, I had imagined to myself what our first conversation would be. I said such sweet, tender things to her (things that described so well what I felt for her) that tears came to my eyes.

" Today, with a troubled heart, and seeking to make my plans and anticipate everything in the absence of *the husband* (1), I must have seemed to her hard and pedantic. I felt that I did not seem as affectionate as of old. But the fear of seeing Signor P[ietragrua] coming in at any moment kept me in a continual state of anxiety. It was my task to persuade her to come back to Milan soon. I feared all the time that I might forget something. In a word, I was not over-amiable, and I fear that this may have diminished her love for me ".

The welcome was thus not exactly what he had dreamt it would be. Besides, Angela demanded that her admirer should leave immediately for Lake Maggiore in order to dispel her husband's alleged suspicions. Stendhal submitted

(1) In English in the original.

to this whim of his beloved's with a good grace and went to spend two days on Isola Bella. Let him now relate what happened on his return to Sacro Monte.

Madonna del Monte, 27 October, ten minutes past seven

" I have never seen such a comfortable inn as the one in which I am writing this. It is the Casin of Signor Bellati, adjoining the church. I wanted to be allowed to go out and come in again during the night. I foresaw that this would be rather difficult, but of course everything was arranged. My apartment looks on to the peristyle of the church, and here, in my pocket, I have the *benedetta chiave* [1] which gives me my liberty. Signor Bellati, the brother of the parish priest, kept me amused for an hour and a half with highly respectful conversation; I, for my part, made up to him in order to broach the matter of the key in the most friendly way possible. It was not necessary for me, however, to take this imprudent step.

" Angela herself took one which amply conveys the difference between Italian love and French love. I arrived, in horrible weather, in what is known as a portantine. This wretched portantine was anything but elegant; it consisted of a few poles, a stool, a piece of canvas flung over the poles, and an umbrella of waxed canvas, placed between the upper parts, whose handle got in the way of my face.

" I thought that Bellati's inn was at the opposite end of the village to that inhabited by Signora P[ietragrua]. This was indeed true of the inn proper; but they did me the honour of taking me to the casin, my way being lighted by three torches, with great pomp and circumstance; all these lights passed by the door of ... at half-past six, and then through a dark, narrow passage, past the private door *of the husband* [2], which was open.

" I slouched in with my head tucked in between my shoulders, my ridiculous demeanour being noticed only by A[ngela], who, a moment later, *is gone with her son at my casin; she had given me a little billet, and said* [3] that at this moment two nuns were being lodged in the room through which I had been supposed to enter; that she would do everything possible so that I might come at midnight; that she would be back in Milan on Monday. As she said this to me, she seemed charming. This is the note which she slipped into my hand:

A mezzanotte. La gelosia del marito si è vivamente destata. Prudenza, e preparate tutto per ripartire domani mattina non più tardi delle 7 [4].

" But it seems to me that this message was written before the arrival of the accursed nuns.

Just as I was writing the last line of the previous page, somebody came and called at my door, which I had not thought to open again after having closed

(1) Blessed key.
(2) In English in the original.
(3) Stendhal's English.
(4) 'At midnight. The husband's jealousy has been strongly aroused. Take care and make every preparation to leave tomorrow morning not later than 7'.

it in the presence of Signor Bellati. Perhaps, I thought, it is that good-looking boy Antonio [1], and went at once to open it; perhaps he was bringing me an order countermanding the rendezvous in whose honour I had braved a storm worthy of Moncenisio. My A[ngela] was right. It would have been better had she come to me. I had rejected the idea for reasons of a general nature; I thought that the inn was at the other end of the village and of how awful the weather would be at midnight. I should have done better to make certain of the situation of my lodgings.

" However, they are the most comfortable and picturesque that I know, and therefore well-suited for writing a tragedy.

" Here I am now, at half-past eight, all by myself in my comfortable apartment, with a swirling gale beating on my window panes and making the only noise that I can hear apart from the crackling of my little fire. I am going to read the volume of Ossian which is all I have brought with me.

" Yesterday, at half-past nine, a second letter: *non è più speranza* [2] etc. I was therefore reduced to going to bed and reading Ossian. I could not keep my eyes open; during the day I had not thought of sleeping. But I must not forget that I might have fallen asleep in a perilous place and only woken up in the morning, or else, dead with fatigue, I might have tasted imperfectly of the pleasure of which the two nuns, who arrived yesterday *apposta* [3], deprived me.

" Are these two nuns real, or are they the phantom offspring of fear? All through the night the spirits of heros were groaning at the height of the tempest, and even this morning their woeful moaning has not abated. It is a gloomy morning and we are shrouded in mist. If I had been fortunate last night, it had been my intention to spend today here incognito and not to leave before Monday morning. *She writes to me that she will be tomorrow evening at Milan* [4]. I myself expect to get there today at two o'clock."

Nevertheless, it does not appear that his misadventure had much effect upon Stendhal. Twenty-five years later, in his 'Vie de Henry Brulard', he assures us that he still has a pleasant recollection of it. In 1817, he returned to Sacro Monte, and was quite untroubled by his revisitation of the place; at least, so it seems from what he writes in his 'Rome, Naples et Florence':

" In the evening we went up to the *Madonna del Monte*; this sanctuary must have cost millions. I am writing this at Berinetti's inn; we are very comfortable here. As we made the ascent, some of the donkeys came to grief on the slippery paving, and the ladies had falls which, however, were merely amusing; we stopped frequently at one or other of the fifteen or twenty chapels in order to turn round and enjoy the view. The overall view was magnificent; at sunset, we saw seven lakes. Believe me, my friend, one can go the length and breadth of France and Germany without experiencing this ... "

(1) Signora Pietragrua's son.
(2) 'Not a hope'.
(3) On purpose.
(4) In English in the original.

VARESE:

"... We stopped frequently at one or other of the fifteen or twenty chapels in order to turn round and enjoy the view. The overall view was magnificent; at sunset, we saw seven lakes...". The chapels which line the road to the sanctuary of Sacro Monte are actually fifteen in number, and each of them enjoys a picturesque position with a fine view.

VARESE:

"Varese", declared Stendhal in 1817, is a "little town all of whose houses have been transformed, over the past ten years, into palaces". Without a doubt, he admired the Ducal Palace, built in the eighteenth century by Francesco III of Este, Lord of Varese, as well as the vast and charming garden laid out in the Italian style.

LAKE COMO

" ... Signor Isimbardi, a superior man and one of my new friends, was most anxious to take me to Lake Como. 'What do you expect to find in Rome?' he said to me last evening at the Caffè dell'Accademia. 'Could it be *sublime beauty?* Well, our Lake Como is in nature what the ruins of the Colosseum are to architecture, and Correggio's *St. Jerome* among pictures' ". ('Rome, Naples et Florence', *14 December, 1816*).

Stendhal did not listen to the exhortations of his "new friend", and left Milan "with tears in his eyes" to travel to Rome; but, no sooner had he returned, the following summer, than he hastened to visit Lake Como. Actually, he had already been there once, in 1813, in order to escape from the melancholy he felt at having to spend five days without seeing the fair Angela and to have thus a pretext for passing through Monza, where she was staying. He had kept a pleasant memory of that short visit: "My journey to Como was enchanting, with walks along the side of the lake throughout the day, and, in the evening, the little Monbelli girls ... ", he wrote in his 'Journal'. This time, he gave himself up entirely to the charm, both sweet and sad, of this enchanting lake, which caused him to write these lines in his 'Rome, Naples et Florence':

"*Villa Melzi, on Lake Como, 18 July.* As if to redouble my melancholy, I must needs let myself be persuaded by the pretty contessina Valenza, whose husband I knew at Smolensk, to accompany her to the lakes. Nothing in the world can compare with the charm of these scorching summer days spent on the lakes near Milan, amid woods of chestnut trees so green, bathing their branches in the waters.

" This morning at five o'clock, we left Como in a boat covered with a beautiful blue and white canopy. We visited the villa of the Princess of Wales [1], and the Pliniana with its intermittent fountain; Pliny's letter is engraved in the marble. At this place, the lake becomes wild and sombre; the mountains drop down almost sheer into the water. We rounded the point of *Balbianin* [2], not without difficulty, and the ladies were afraid; it was as rugged a sight as

(1) This refers to the Villa d'Este, then the residence of Caroline of Brunswick, wife of the future George IV of England.

(2) Milanese dialect for Punta del Balbianello.

Lake Como

that of the Scottish lakes. At last, we caught sight of the delightful Tremezzina shore and of those charming little valleys which, protected to northward by a high mountain, enjoy a climate like that of Rome; those Milanese who suffer from the cold come to spend the winter here; the palaces become numerous along the green slopes and are reflected in the water. It is too much to say *palaces*, but not enough to say country houses. They are built in an elegant, picturesque, voluptuous style, peculiar to the three lakes and the *colli di Brianza.* The mountains of Lake Como are covered with chestnut trees to their very summits. The villages, situated half-way up the slopes, become visible from afar because of their belfries, which rise above the treetops. The sound of bells, mellowed by the distance and the wavelets of the lake, find an echo in suffering souls. How can I describe this emotion? One must love the arts; one must love and be unhappy.

"At three o'clock, our boats put into the harbour (*darsena*) of *Casa Sommariva* (1), opposite Villa Melzi. The ladies were in need of a rest; three Italian officers and I turned our thoughts to melancholy things; we left the rest of the company, crossing the lake in ten minutes, and now here we were in the gardens of Villa Melzi, and then at *Casa Giulia,* which looks on to the other branch of the lake; it was an eerie view. We stopped by *Villa Sfondrata* (2), situated in the middle of a wood of great trees on the steep promontory which separates the two branches of the lake; the latter is shaped like the letter 'Y' upside down (λ). The trees border a drop of three hundred

(1) Now known as Villa Carlotta, whose owner at that time was Count Sommariva, one of the heads of the Cisalpine Republic.
(2) Now Villa Serbelloni, built by Pope Gregory XIV (Niccoló Sfondrati).

feet straight down to the water. Below us to the left, on the other side of the lake, we saw the Sommariva palace; to the right, l'*Orrido di Bellan* [1], and, stretching before us, ten leagues of lake. From time to time, the breeze carried across to us the sound of peasants singing on the opposite bank. The clear Italian sun shone down and there was that silence characteristic of extreme heat; only a *venticello* (breath of wind), from the east, from time to time ruffles the surface of the water."

Twenty years later, Stendhal evoked the memory of these places in his 'Chartreuse de Parme'; for it is on this lake, in the castle of Grianta, above Cadenabbia, that Fabrizio del Dongo is born, and the Duchess Sanseverina has spent her childhood. She returns there after the death of her first husband, and is deeply moved when she sees the same places, the same panoramas:

"The countess wished to go with Fabrizio to revisit the enchanting surroundings of Grianta, of which travellers had spoken so enthusiastically: Villa Melzi, situated on the opposite bank in front of the castle and providing it with a fine view, and, above, the hallowed *Sfondrati* woods and the bold promontory dividing the two branches of the lake; the voluptuous Como side and the forbidding shores of Lecco; all these were so sublime and graceful to look upon, that the most renowned place in the world, the Bay of Naples, equalled, but certainly did not surpass them. With delight the countess recaptured the memories of her early youth and compared them with her present feelings. Lake Como, she told herself, is not surrounded, like the Lake of Geneva, by large stretches of land, which are hedged in and cultivated by modern methods, and thus call to mind money and speculation. Here, on all sides, I see hills of varying height covered with clusters of trees, planted at random and not yet spoiled by the hand of man and forced *to yield him revenue.* Amid these admirably-shaped hills with their striking slopes that sweep down to the lake, I can vividly imagine the descriptions of Tasso and Ariosto. Everything is noble and warm, everything speaks of love, and nothing reminds one of the ugliness of civilization. The villages, half-way up the hills, are concealed by big trees, and above the treetops the gracefully-built belfries stand forth. Even if, from time to time, a little field, perhaps fifty yards across, interrupts the clusters of chestnut trees and wild cherries, the eye is well pleased, for it sees plants growing there more vigorously and happily than elsewhere. Beyond the hills, on whose peaks are situated hermitages, in all of which we would gladly live, the astonished gaze is arrested by the crests of the Alps, forever covered with snow, and their stern austerity reminds one that we must all taste something of the misfortunes of life in order to increase our present joy. The distant sound of a village bell, tolling from some hidden little tree-clad village, grips the imagination; these sounds, borne forth upon the mellowing waters, take on a note of sweet melancholy and resignation, and seem to say to man: 'Life moves on; do not therefore be so hard to please; grasp your happiness while it offers and hasten to enjoy it'..."

(1) Milanese dialect meaning 'the Gorge of Bellano'.

LAKE COMO:

Here is "the bold promontory dividing the two branches of the lake: the voluptuous Como side and the forbidding shores of Lecco; all these sights were so sublime and graceful to look upon, that the most renowned place in the world, the Bay of Naples, equalled, but certainly did not surpass them...".

LAKE COMO:

"La Sfondrata", known today as Villa Serbelloni, was built at Bellagio, towards the end of the sixteenth century, by Pope Gregory XIV, who belonged to the Milanese family of Sfondrati. As Stendhal says, it is "situated in the middle of a wood of great trees, on the steep promontory which separates the two branches of the lake", from which a grandiose panorama can be seen.

LAKE COMO:

"The places which he loved best on earth were Lake Como and Naples"; thus wrote Stendhal in one of his autobiographies. This view of the lake at Varenna surely justifies the author's predilection.

LAKE COMO:

Villa Sommariva, built in the seventeenth century at Tremezzo, owes its present name to Charlotte of Prussia who, about the middle of the last century, received it as a wedding gift from her mother. It contains many works of art of great value and is surrounded by magnificent grounds, famous for their azaleas and exotic plants.

LAKE COMO:

Beyond the rocky spur which juts into the lake to form the Punta del Balbianello begins "the delightful Tremezzina shore..., a place where winter is unknown". This enchanting lakeside is dotted with villas and gardens, and Stendhal himself, imagining what would be the ideal position for a villa, declares: "In my eyes, the finest still remains the Tremezzina shore...".

LAKE COMO:

"At the Pliny Villa", advises Stendhal, "one should see the intermittent fountain, which was already in existence in Pliny's time, and this is proved by his letter, in Latin, inscribed in the marble". This villa, built in the sixteenth century, is backed by a precipitous wood and mirrored in the waters of Lake Como. Its name derives from the intermittent fountain described by the two Plinys.

BRIANZA

" We left Milan at seven o'clock on 25 August, 1816, in the company of a rich merchant from Reggio who, after ten years absence, was returning to Asso, his native town; there was also an ugly girl, who has astonishingly big eyes ... "

Thus began the excursion undertaken by Stendhal and the Milanese lawyer, Giuseppe Vismara, to the hills and little lakes which alternate in forming the scenery between the two branches of Lake Como. For five days, the two friends behaved like schoolboys on holiday, looking for beautiful countryside, but also giving chase to innkeepers' beautiful wives. Stendhal's diary is too detailed to be quoted here in its entirety, but we may assure the reader that the two travellers did not waste a single minute of their time, indefatigably visiting villas and gardens, climbing mountains, making trips in boats, fishing, picking flowers, contemplating the view and besieging the buxom wenches of Brianza.

Here we find them scaling a rickety ladder in the belfry of Giussano: " What a beautiful view can be had from this old stone belfry; it is a sight that I shall not forget. Before us lies the palace of the Marquis Cagnola; at midday, the grey outline of Milan Cathedral is clearly visible, while on the right the church of Rho can be seen on the horizon, and beyond that the belfry of San Gaudenzio at Novara ... "

At Inverigo, they visited the famous 'Rotonda' built by Cagnola, which was not yet completed and Stendhal found grandiose. From the top of the Rotonda, there was another fine view; to them the whole Plain of Lombardy " seemed like a sea ".

After skirting Lake Alserio and the wild and melancholy Lake of Segrino, they reached Asso, whose steep, slippery alleys reminded Stendhal of Sacro Monte, " when I was mad about Gina ". The next day they went on the Lake of Pusiano, " bordered on the southern side by small, well-wooded hills, that give the lake a soft quality in contrast to the austerity of its fellows, which are surrounded by high mountains with steep slopes. The only high mountain is in the north, behind Pusiano. This mountain is bare,

The Brianza countryside

and on the right of it stands a village. There are many belfries beyond the lake ... "

The two travellers drank some good wine at the *Osteria Nova* and had themselves rowed to the romantic island which rises in the middle of the lake. They also took a boat out on Lake Oggiono; but rather than contemplate the surrounding countryside, they preferred to gaze — and not only gaze — upon the girl from the inn whom they brought with them. Next they walked up to the delightful villa, owned by General Pino, from which they were able to admire yet another vast panorama, whose " main feature is the Lake of Pusiano; one can see four lakes (Alserio, Pusiano and Oggiono), the last of these being divided in two; there is a very good view of Cagnola's Rotonda at Inverigo, nine miles away; Milan is hidden by the wooded hills on the left and cannot be seen ".

Vismara did not understand why his friend displayed such diligence in keeping a diary of these days, even making a note of minor details, but Stendhal explained to him that particularly his notes, scribbled in the margin, would help him, many years thence, to recall all the sensations he had felt that day. " This type of diary ", he concluded, " is intended exclusively for him who wrote it ". And there is no doubt that, when he re-read them after many years had passed, these somewhat hurriedly-written, but richly-detailed pages helped him to relive, with vivid clarity, those unwontedly pleasant, carefree days.

For the rest, it seems that he also had most pleasant memories of the other places in Brianza which he visited. At Monza, for example, in 1813, he spent some happy hours in the arms of Angela, celebrating the anniversary of the " victory " that he had won two years before—he consulted his braces to confirm the date and hour. At Monticello, he enjoyed " one of the greatest pleasures to be had in Lombardy ": that of hunting thrushes with a *roccolo* (a vertical net concealed among the trees) and eating them:

" ... The women—he explains in his ' Rome, Naples et Florence '—rave about *uzei colla polenta.* Towards the end of autumn an infinite number of little birds (*uzei*) are caught by means of nets, and served roast on a yellow paste, made, on the spot, of maize flour and hot water. Throughout the year, this *polenta* is the staple diet of the Lombard peasant. I have spent most agreeable mornings at Signor Cavaletti's *rocolo*, at Monticello, together with three priests. The delicious morning air fills one with *animal* exuberance. In the evening, the joys of a delicious supper of *uccelletti,* the *polenta* and the general joviality, seem to emphasize the lively animal pleasures to be had in life. I should like to see an English Methodist set down in the midst of such hilarity! Either he would burst into fulminations or else go and hang himself. (I refer to Eustace, speaking of Italian joviality). German or Swiss conviviality, however, is perfectly compatible; a number of Haydn's symphonies depict just this type of happiness. Had I but the talent of Mrs. Radcliffe, what a description I could give of Monticello! (near Montevecchia, north of Monza). The feeling of all that is beautiful overwelms one from all sides ".

As for the description of Monticello, a place which Stendhal found exeedingly pleasant, we may find it further on, also in ' Rome, Naples et Florence ':

" ... We have come to Monticello; there is an admirable view from *Casa Cavaletti.* I have never before seen the like; on the horizon, one can see Milan Cathedral, and further away, a blue line in the sky formed by the mountains of Parma and Bologna. We are on a hill; on the right there is a superb view of a fertile plain, some rocks and two or three lakes; on the left, there is another magnificent view which is the opposite in every detail of the first; there are some hills and the *Madonna di Montevecchia;* before us stretches beautiful Lombardy, rich and luxuriantly green, a limitless horizon, and the eye can see for thirty leagues as far as the mists of Venice; this view can be compared to that seen at *San Michele in Bosco.* In this immense sky, one can often see a black thunderstorm, rumbling away in a corner that extends over five or six leagues, while all the rest is serene. One sees the storm approaching, receding, or fading away, or else, within a few minutes, one is in the midst of it. The rain is torrential; fearful claps of thunder rock the houses; but soon the wonderfully pure air is there to add to one's pleasures. All this has been happening to us for the past two hours; at the moment, we can make out the windows of a house eight leagues from here ... "

BRIANZA:

The gentle hills of Brianza, so beloved by Stendhal, are often lined with rows of cypresses, which impart to the landscape a note of soft melancholy.

BRIANZA:

"The Palace of the Marquis Cagnola is built on the flat top of a little hill... The pine trees provide an ornament that harmonises perfectly with the sublime quality of La Rotonda..." Here, too, we see the flourishing maize crop which Stendhal often remarks upon with curiosity in Lombardy.

BRIANZA:

The "charming Lake of Pusiano" is the most romantic of the little lakes dotted about the Brianza countryside. Almost in the middle can be seen an island, covered with cypresses, which Stendhal and his friend found bigger than they had thought.

BRIANZA:

The sanctuary of Montevecchia is one of the most famous in Brianza; it stands on the top of a hill from which one looks out over "beautiful Lombardy, luxuriant in its greenness and riches...". The road up to the sanctuary, known as the Ascent to Calvary, is bordered with numerous roadside steles of stone, representing the Stations of the Cross.

LAKE GARDA

"Left for Salò on horseback with the General; arrived on the first at Desenzano; returned to Brescia on the second ". This is all we find in Henry Beyle's 'Journal', dated 30 Messidor (19 July) 1801, regarding his first experience of Lake Garda. He is scarcely more eloquent on the subject of another excursion, in July 1817, of which we read in 'Rome, Naples et Florence'. If there were other occasions, as would seem probable, he does not tell us about them. The laconism of his 'Journal' does not surprise us: the pages of these first years are rather threadbare, and at times downright telegraphic in style—except when he deals with the performances which he attended at theatres in Milan, Bergamo and Brescia; perhaps he did not have time to write to Pauline, as he did on other occasions, to describe to her the places he had visited. In that summer of 1801, Beyle, a second lieutenant in the dragoons, found himself stationed at Brescia as aide-de-camp to General Michaud. It was with the latter that he travelled from Brescia to Salò and Desenzano. It is difficult to imagine that, as they travelled over the undulating hills that border Lake Garda, and followed its banks, he who "loved beautiful landscape" did not look around him, wrapt in admiration. On the contrary, he can have done little else but this if, after so many years had passed, he was able to give such vivid descriptions of those places and views as he does at the beginning of the tenth chapter of his 'Mémoires sur Napoleon', dedicated to the final phase of the first Italian campaign:

"We are about to begin the narration of admirable exploits; but, so that the reader may feel that which is sublime about them, I would beg him to look once at a good map of Lake Garda.

"The banks of this lake, whose beautiful forests contrast with the calm water, are perhaps the finest landscape in the world, and the young soldiers of the Italian Army were far from insensitive to this beauty. To northward, on the Riva bank, the lake narrows and becomes lost among high mountains, whose peaks are covered with snow throughout the year; opposite the pretty little town of Salò, however, the lake presents a splendid stretch of water, at least three leagues wide, and the traveller, at one glance, can survey a panorama extending over more than six leagues, starting from Desenzano in the south, where the road coming from Brescia leads to Verona.

"The banks of the lake and the hills all around are covered with magnificent olive trees, which in this country grow to a great size, while there are chestnut trees on all the banks that face south and are sheltered from the north wind by some hill that ends in a precipice by the lake. One can see the dark foliage of the beautiful orange trees that grow here naturally; their colour

contrasts admirably with that of the mountains round the lake, which is light and ethereal.

" Opposite Salò, at the eastern end of the lake, there is an enormous rotund mountain, devoid of trees, which, I imagine, for that reason bears the name of *Monte Baldo.* Behind this mountain, some distance away and east of the lake, the River Adige flows into a deep gorge; this river became famous as a result of the battles of which we shall tell.

" It was on a plateau, or raised plain, situated between the Adige, Monte Baldo and the town of Garda, which gives its name to the lake, that the immortal Battle of Rivoli took place the following January.

" On the southern side of the lake, the fertile, wooded hills, which separate the large village of Desenzano from the little town of Lonato, are perhaps the pleasantest and most striking in the whole of Lombardy, which is so famous for its beautiful hills crowned with woods. The adjective *ameno* (pleasant) would seem to have been created for this magnificent countryside.

" From the top of these Desenzano hills, over which the road passes, rising as it approaches Brescia, one is sufficiently high above the lake to be able to enjoy a sight of its banks. The traveller sees below him the Sirmio peninsula, celebrated in verse by Catullus and remarkable, even today, for its great trees. Further on, in the direction of Verona and somewhat to the right, one perceives the sombre fortress of Peschiera, black and squat, and built like a mill sluice at the place where the river Mincio flows out of the lake. In 1796, it still belonged to the Venetians, who, in days gone by, alarmed by the League of Cambrai, spent twenty million francs on its construction.

" On the road to Brescia, the town of Lonato proclaims its position from afar by the white dome of its church. Further towards the south, one can see Castiglione, a gloomy little town situated on a patch of ground in the middle of a plain of rocks and gravel; it is the only place in these parts which is not charming.

" Behind Castiglione and Lonato—at the western end of the lake, therefore—runs the little River Chiese, which is transformed by the mildest summer rainstorm into a magnificent torrent. This river flows down from the Alps and parallel to the lake, and the Austrians, when attacking the left flank of the French army, often followed its banks. Having been repulsed, they would usually seek refuge among the chestnut-clad Gavardo Mountains ...

" It was during those months in which the banks of the lake are at their most agreeable, during the burning heat of August, that the two little towns, Lonato and Castiglione, were immortalized by the battles which bear their names. At this time of year, the valleys and plains were covered for miles with maize, a plant which, in this country, grows to a height of eight or ten feet, and whose stems are so leafy that they afforded excellent cover for ambushes. Apart from this, the plains and hills are covered with elm trees, which are twenty or thirty feet high and overgrown with vines that trail from one tree to the next; this gives the country the appearance of unbroken forest, and often, in summer time, the eye can scarcely penetrate a distance of more than a hundred paces from the main road ... "

LAKE GARDA:
"The banks of the lake and the hills all around are covered with magnificent olive trees, which in this country grow to a great size, while there are chestnut trees on all the banks that face south and are sheltered from the north wind by some hill that ends in a precipice by the lake. One can see the dark foliage of the beautiful orange trees that grow here naturally; their colour contrasts admirably with that of the mountains round the lake, which is light and ethereal".

LAKE GARDA:

"The banks of this lake, whose beautiful forests contrast with the calm water, are perhaps the finest landscape in the world... opposite the pretty little town of Salò, the lake consists of a splendid stretch of water... Opposite Salò, at the eastern end of the lake, there is an enormous rotund mountain, devoid of trees, which, I imagine, for that reason bears the name of Monte Baldo".

LAKE GARDA:

"To northward, on the Riva bank, the lake narrows and becomes lost among high mountains". And here, too, the mountains are reflected in the calm waters.

PAVIA

The first stage of Stendhal's journey across Italy in 1817, which provided him with the general outline of his 'Rome, Naples et Florence', ended at the town of Pavia, where he had probably been before, or which, as we know, in any case, from his 'Journal', he had passed through in 1801 on his way to Bra to join his squadron.
As always, he was leaving Milan against his will and, what is more, with " tears in my eyes'; in this state of mind he did not feel like describing the beautiful mediaeval town and its ancient bridges over the Ticino. But, as ever, the inhabitants, their customs and the history of Pavia aroused his curiosity, so that the picture which he presents to the reader is again vivid, varied and interesting.

" Pavia, *16 December*.—The countryside through which one passes between Milan and Pavia is the richest in Europe. All the time one can see the irrigation canals which give it its fertility; one follows a navigable canal by means of which it is possible to go by boat from Milan to Venice, or even to America; often however, in broad daylight, one is held up by robbers. Austrian despotism does not know how to suppress them. And yet it would be sufficient to have a constable in every village, who, as soon as he perceived unusual expenditure, would ask the peasant concerned: 'Where did you get the money from?'
" Of Pavia I will say nothing, for you will find accounts in travel books...
I had come to Pavia to meet the young Lombards who study at this university, the most learned in Italy; and no man could have been more pleased with the experience than I. Five or six Milanese ladies, knowing that I was stopping at Pavia, gave me messages for their sons. These young men, whom I lost no time in telling about Napoleon and Moscow, gladly accepted my invitation to dine at my inn and the offer of seats in the box which I secured at the *Quattro Cavalieri* Theatre.
" How different they were from the *Burschen* of Göttingen! The young men who throng the streets of Pavia are not pink-and-white like their fellows in Göttingen; their gaze does not seem lost in sentimental, fanciful musing. They are silent, defiant and fearsome; they wear enormous shocks of auburn or black hair, and their sombre faces have an olive pallor which is devoid of

easy-going happiness and the amiable absent-mindedness of young Frenchmen. Should a woman appear in the street, then all the gravity of these young patriots changes to another expression. A little Parisienne, arriving here, would catch her death of fright; she would imagine all these young men to be brigands. That is why I like them. They do not affect gentleness, nor gaiety, and still less insouciance. A young man who boasts of being *poco curante* (uncaring), seems to me as proud of his condition as the keeper of a harem. There is fanatical hatred for the *Tedesk* (Germans) among the students of Pavia. A man is highly esteemed if one night, in a lonely street, he can mete out a volley of blows with a stick to some young German, or, as they say, *make him run.* You may well imagine that I have witnessed none of these exploits; but they have been related to me at great length and without my being bored, for I was studying the narrator. These young men all know Petrarch by heart, and at least half of them compose sonnets. They are enthralled by the passionate sensibility which Petrarch's platonic pathos and metaphysics do not always hide. One of these young people took it upon himself to recite to me the most beautiful sonnet in the world, the first from Petrarch's 'Canzoniere':

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono...

(*Note added in 1826*: Here I suppress a long passage about Italian youth. These metaphysics, which are nothing more or less than the *substance of a hundred anecdotes,* must be read on the banks of the Ticino, if they are not to be boring. Such truths appear impudent to the foreigner and wounding

The Charterhouse of Pavia

to local self-esteem. This diary of mine will perhaps seem less paradoxical to those who travel in Italy these days. Four volumes would be required to relate all the anecdotes of which but one word of my notes reminds me, and from which I have deduced morals. I refer the reader to the public documents of the year 1825 for an account of the revolt of the students of Pavia: firstly, the death of young Guerra; secondly, the events after his burial. The actions of the police on that day will not have been forgotten twenty years hence, and each year their vile barbarism will be exaggerated. Whether it was a matter of courage, or rather an *access of fury* that dispelled their fear of the consequences, the students of Pavia are perhaps superior to those of any other country. Nothing but actual death, and one that was particularly stark and ugly to see, would be capable of stopping ten thousand Italian students; nothing would deter them short of a hail of bullets such as to tear and scatter their entrails, as at the death of General Lacuée).

" ... I have searched in vain, beneath the walls of Pavia, for the battle-field which was the scene of the misfortunes of François I^er^ (1525), so well depicted for us by du Bellay. There is a fine road at Pavia, built like those of Milan, with four strips of Baveno granite. The posts placed on both sides of main roads, at intervals of six metres, are also made of granite. They call them *paracarri.* This same word was the nickname given by the people to the French soldiers: *Ah! Poveri paracarri!* (1) they often said to me in Milan with a tone of regret; and yet it was with hatred that the word was used before 1814. Peoples only like things because they hate something which is worse.

" Two miles before one gets to Pavia, one perceives a number of very thin, brick towers, rising up above the houses. Every great nobleman from the court of the King of Lombardy, or of the Viscontis, always had a tower in which he took refuge if some rival courtier came to assassinate him. I was delighted with the architecture of the Collegio Borromeo; it was built by Pellegrini, who also built the church at Rho, on the road that leads from Milan to the Simplon.

" It was Galeazzo Visconti who, in 1362, was responsible for developing the University of Pavia. He instituted the teaching there of civil and canon law, medicine, physics, and also that art which filled Napoleon with such apprehension and which, even today, still gives rise to such misgiving: *logic.* It was the same Galeazzo who invented an ingenious method of inflicting atrocious tortures upon a prisoner for forty days on end without killing him completely. The prisoner was cared for by a surgeon so that, on the forty-first day, it was still possible to put him to death in a cruel manner. Barnabò, Galeazzo's brother, did even worse in Milan ... Such princes, when they do not increase general brutishness and ignorance, help to produce men of great quality, like those that existed in Italy in the sixteenth century. These men still occasionally come to the fore in matters connected with *private life*, but mostly they are at great pains to conceal themselves; today, almost the only passion which will cause them to reveal themselves is love ... "

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(1) Poor kerbstones!

PAVIA:

Pavia is visible from a distance because of "a number of very thin, brick towers, rising up above the houses". In the Middle Ages they numbered more than a hundred. Those which still survive, although few, suffice to give the panorama of the town an individual character.

PAVIA:

"... At two o'clock we crossed the covered bridge over the Ticino...", Stendhal noted in 1801. This is the same medieval bridge that was destroyed in the war and was recently reconstructed as it had been before.

INDEX OF COLOURED PLATES

The passages of Stendhal translated in this volume were taken from the following works:

Rome, Naples et Florence (*Pauvert, Paris, 1955*)
Journal (*'Œuvres Intimes', Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris, 1956*)
Vie de Henry Brulard (*Ibidem*)
Souvenirs d'égotisme (*Ibidem*)
Essais d'autobiographie (*Ibidem*)
Correspondance (*Le Divan, Paris, 1951*)
Vie de Napoléon (*Le Divan, Paris, 1951*)
Promenades dans Rome (*Pauvert, Paris, 1955*)
Mémoires d'un Touriste (*Pauvert, Paris, 1955*)
La Chartreuse de Parme (*Hazan, Paris, 1949*)
Petit Guide d'Italie (*Le Divan, Paris, 1951*)